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JURASSIC WORLD

"IT'S NOT
ALL RUNNING
AWAY FROM
RAPTORS"

Jurassic Park 4
world exclusive

GAME OF
THRONES

Stars freak out
over Season 4

TRANSFORMERS 4

MEET THE
DINOBOTS

Who on Cybertron
are Scorn and Slug?

COUNTDOWN TO

STAR WARS EPISODE VII



Secrets, rumours and all you need to
know about sci-fi's new hope

HUGE ONE-ON-ONE

HANNIBAL
SEASON 2

Bryan Fuller spills
the fava beans

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THE HOBBIT 3 //
SUPERNATURAL //
WALKING DEAD //
GHOSTBUSTERS //
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EDGE OF TOMORROW

TOM CRUISE
DIES TODAY

Director Doug Liman
on future war

CREATOR SPEAKS
BATTLEFIELD
EARTH

How it all went wrong

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ISSUE 093

AMY POND
GOES GORE

Gillan talks Oculus

ANDY SERKIS
VS MANKIND

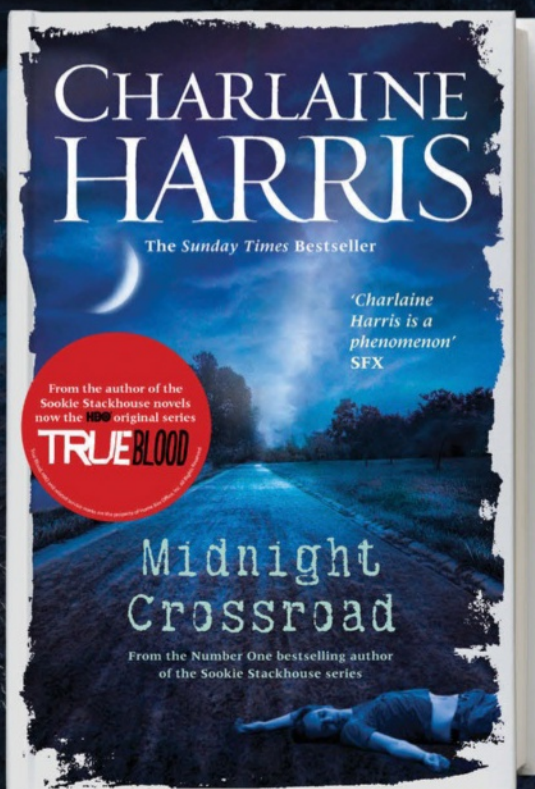
Caesar on Apes



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The blockbuster schedule hasn't looked so epic since Kirk Douglas pounded the sand in *Spartacus*. Stretching from

X-Men: Days Of Future Past and deep into the box office event horizon that is 2015 and 2016, every single film is a world-building, cross-promotional mega-event that will leave toy stores straining, wallets dry and mouths agape.

We're referring to *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *The Fantastic Four*, *Batman Vs Superman*, *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*, *Captain America 3*, *Sinister Six*, *Venom*, and of course, *Star Wars: Episode VII* and the TIE Fighters swarming around its planet-levelling bulk: *Star Wars: Rebels*, Marvel Comics, spin-off movies and the rest of the trilogy.

Depending on your age, you've embraced 'new *Star Wars* excitement' a few times before. It's not exactly an alien brew, but this feels different. The prequel trilogy was new, ambitious and exciting, but this feels like the rumbling of culture's tectonic plates as new land masses form. As *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* began to weave the threads that would become the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it was impossible to imagine an *Avengers* movie, let alone a successful one. Now we're being asked to routinely imagine so much more, and that's what science fiction and fantasy is all about.

Star Wars: Episode VII isn't just building a new franchise; it's building a new paradigm, and that's what we've always dreamed of.

James
James Hoare
Editor



GET EXCITED ABOUT TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

The knives were out as soon as Michael Bay got involved, but finding a sweet spot between the cynical satire of Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's comic and the gormless capering of the cartoon is nigh-on impossible anyway. It's impossible to predict how this will turn out, even from the awkwardly toned trailers, and that's pretty exciting in itself. Good or bad, movies need to be surprising again.

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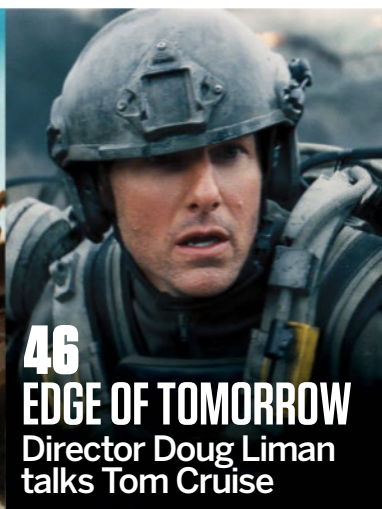
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MEET THE TEAM

Q. What's would you like to see in Star Wars: Episode VII?



James Hoare Editor

A. Life Day
A sing-along with slankets – and give Chewie his medal!



Jodie Tyley Deputy Editor

A. No lens flare
I don't want to see lens flare bouncing off lightsabers.



Jonathan Hatfull
Staff Writer

A. Lena Dunham
Because Adam Driver should have a familiar face with him.



Steve Wright
Production Editor

A. Ahsoka Tano
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Your essential, trustworthy and unrivalled guide to the latest genre happenings

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JURASSIC PARK IV: THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Jurassic World star Chris Pratt on breathing new life into Spielberg's fossilised classic

WORDS JODIE TYLEY INTERVIEWS STEVE NASH

It's been 65 million years in the making, but there's only one more year to wait before *Jurassic World* stomps into cinemas. Filming on the fourth instalment is already underway in Hawaii's Oahu and Kauai – the original locations of the first movies – and signals an abrupt change of pace for star Chris Pratt. He's recently returned from space, having completed work on Marvel's *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, and is excited about playing the role of a "rugged, ex-military type".

"I am going to run from some dinosaurs!" he declares. "The story is really, really good. It's been 21 years since the first one came out, and what's nice is that over time, the story itself has been allowed to develop the way that it would in that fictional world that Jurassic Park exists."

This is confirmation that the plot of the movie will continue in real time, but

after the last trip to the island in 2001 with *Jurassic Park III* went so badly – for both the characters and the box office – it makes us wonder why anyone would go back. Speaking with *MTV News*, Pratt says the film tackles that issue: "[Director] Colin [Trevorrow] did a great job of justifying it, and in his own way having fun with that, so anybody who goes in with that question will be really amused – the way I was."

Trevorrow worked on the script with writing partner Derek Connolly after being hired off the back of their award-winning indie *Safety Not Guaranteed*. The 37-year old hit headlines when it was thought he was helming *Star Wars: Episode VII*, but it turned out that the blockbuster epic he was hinting at belonged to a different bearded genius – Steven Spielberg – who will be taking on the role of executive producer.

Jurassic World is bound to look different to its predecessors – it's being filmed in 3D, for starters – but the dinos are hanging onto their scales. This is in spite of recent discoveries that even non-avian beasts may have been covered in feathers, but Trevorrow is digging his claws in on this controversial issue. Explaining his decision, he told *Escape Studios*: "The *Jurassic Park* films have often been caught out by advances in palaeontological understanding, and I'm sure our grasp on dinosaur biology and behaviour will only continue to evolve. I think it makes sense to just stick with the initially created rules rather than trying to keep pace with or second-guess reality."

That's not the only tradition the franchise is upholding, adds Pratt. "I think that there



are really fabulous characters, both for me and Bryce [Dallas Howard, as a scientist] and for the other characters that are in it, continuing in their long line of their tradition of inspired casting choices and having really strong characters," he tells us. "It's not just a movie about people running from dinosaurs." Rounding out the cast are *Carrie*'s Judy Greer, *Merlin*'s Katie McGrath and *New Girl*'s Jake Johnson.

With the exception of Dr Henry Wu (BD Wong), there won't be any cameos from original stars like Sam Neill, Jeff Goldblum or Laura Dern. Trevorrow told *IGN* that the only reason they'd return to the island is that if the screenwriters contrived a reason for them to go: "I know a lot of fans want to see the original characters back. They're iconic. But I respect those actors too much to shoehorn them into this story for my own sentimental reasons." Indeed, the director is such a fan of the films that recently tweeted: "Almost 20 years ago, I snuck out of the house on a school night to see a midnight screening of *Jurassic Park*. I regret nothing."



Jurassic World is unleashed on 12 June 2015. *Jurassic Park 3D* is out now on 3D Blu-ray.



Chris Pratt at San Diego Comic-Con.

008 PROXY



This film is so gristly even its director can't talk about it

010 ALMOST HUMAN



Dredd star Karl Urban on bringing the law to the small screen

017 THE FANTASTIC FOUR



Chris Evans tells us why he misses the Human Torch



**“I AM GOING TO
RUN FROM SOME
DINOSAURS!”**

CHRIS PRATT

BODY HORROR

PROXY IS LARS VON TRIER MEETS MARTYRS

Director Zack Parker on why you are not prepared for indie horror *Proxy*

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



Proxy stars Alexia Rasmussen.

The biggest hit at this year's Glasgow FrightFest was *Proxy*, a tough and grim horror that deals with a pregnant woman who loses her baby and meets a fellow grieving mother – and that's all director and co-writer Zack Parker wants you to know.

"I've found it to be a difficult film to talk about without giving too much away," he tells SciFiNow. "But what I can say is that I feel this film deals with a certain mental condition that I've not really seen portrayed in cinema before."

Proxy is the latest in a series of low-budget chillers from American filmmakers like Adam Wingard, Ti West and Joe Swanberg (who stars in the film). "There's this emergence of young filmmakers with unique voices coming out right now," he enthuses. "There is this interesting new wave of American genre films, and it's very exciting to have a film going around these same sort of channels."

However, genre fans will more than likely spot references to films outside the US too. Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* is a stylistic influence on a major set piece, and there are nods to Pascal Laugier's *Martyrs* and Maury & Bustillo's *Inside*. "I actually watched both those films quite a lot," he explains.

"*Martyrs* was one of those films where you couldn't get a grasp on where the film was going, and that was very exciting, because it almost makes you feel a part of the story as the audience."

Grim, moody and painful, *Proxy* definitely isn't the easiest watch, but it's one of the strongest genre films you'll see all year. It's easy to relate to Swanberg's reaction on first reading the script. "He said, 'That's some fucked-up shit, but it looks like fun, so let's do it.'"

Proxy will be released in the UK later in 2014.



BATMAN BEGINS

GOTHAM'S MOST WANTED

GOTHAM WILL AIR LATER THIS YEAR ON FOX.

Your first look at who's who in TV's Batman prequel

WORDS JODIE TYLEY



JAMES GORDON

The *OC*'s Ben McKenzie is the brave and honest detective Jim Gordon. He'll become the future ally to Bruce Wayne, and this series will explore how he sets about restoring the city of Gotham back to the romantic vision he had as a child.



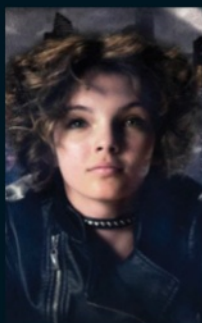
THE PENGUIN

Robin Lord Taylor will play the future monacle-clad criminal mastermind Oswald Cobblepot. He has "the brains of a chess grandmaster and the morals of a jackal," and will be working for gangster Fish Mooney (Jada Pinkett Smith).



THE RIDDLER

Cory Michael Smith is Edward Nygma. Yet to become the Riddler but no less sharp-witted. Nygma is described by *Deadline* as "a brilliant but socially awkward forensic scientist who's eccentric and outgoing and desperate to be liked."



CATWOMAN

Yet to become the super-thief we know and love, Camren Bicondova is Selina Kyle, described as "A teenage orphan who is suspicious and wholly unpredictable. Selina is a street thief and skilled pickpocket — and she's dangerous when cornered."



HARVEY BULLOCK

Donal Logue is the "rough around the edges" partner and mentor to Gordon. He doesn't play by the rules, but gets results with his old-school, hard-ass panache. It looks as though he's lost his cigar-smoking habit from the comics, though.



ALFRED PENNYWORTH

Sean Pertwee is the Wayne family's butler. He's described as "a tough-as-nails ex-marine from East London. Now, in the wake of their tragic deaths, he's fiercely protective of the young Bruce Wayne [David Mazouz]."



FIVE THINGS WITH

DANAI GURIRA

The *Walking Dead*'s resident badass reveals all

WORDS JODIE TYLEY INTERVIEW JONATHAN HATFULL

1 Warm Bodies

Michonne has largely remained a mystery since her dramatic entrance in Season Three, hooded and flanked by armless walkers. But now she's started to bond with Carl Grimes (Chandler Riggs) and opened up about the death of her son, Gurira says it's the start of a whole new Michonne: "I feel like she's been able to face the past that we never knew about and start to heal from it, which she hadn't really done yet. Moving forward, she definitely has more of a capacity to connect with everyone around her."

2 Planet Terror

We've seen walkers crispy fried and finely chopped, and yet the show never fails to horrify us week in, week out. The cast don't get used to it either. "It can be shockingly easy to look at them in all their horror and mess and be ready to hack 'em down," admits Gurira. "Sometimes it gets really easy to do, which makes you think, 'Wait a minute, what's happening here?' It's always fun when you get really grossed out!"

3 Night Of The Living Dead

A recent – and rare – dream sequence showed Michonne in a completely different light. "It's very unusual for the show to do that, so it was a treat to get to dress up and be pretty," she says. "They allowed that little peek into her past for the audience. But it's a dream, so I can't tell you for certain that's exactly the house where she lived. In a dream you're like, 'I was cutting cheese, but I never eat cheese!' But the human connections were definitely literal."

4 Dead Or Alive

The katana could well beat Daryl's crossbow in a contest for the show's coolest weapon, and Michonne is never going to part with it, and you know she won't be leaving Terminus without retrieving it from the suspected cannibals. "It's really an extension of her arm – she can't go far without that thing near by," she agrees. "Either it's on her back or it's in her hand, but it's always there – she found her post-apocalyptic identity through this weapon. The psychology is fascinating to explore, and the more I train with it, the more I understand how it works for her in a mental sense."

5 World War Z

Michonne needn't smash walkers' jaws and lop off their limbs; she can build an army entirely out of cosplayers. "I love that she's translated across so many cultures, so many types of people," says Gurira. "I met some Michonnes when I was in Mexico, I've seen really young Michonnes, I've even seen a little pug dressed as Michonne. In the US you can buy the wig, the vest and a play sword for Halloween. It's all out there now, and I think it's really cool."

The Walking Dead will return when Season Five airs later this year.

The Karl Urban-starring cop drama will finally reach UK shores.

YOU, ROBOT

DREDD IS BACK, SORT OF

Karl Urban lays down the law as JJ Abrams' new series arrives in the UK INTERVIEW STEVE NASH

What are some of the highlights from *Almost Human*'s first season?

Working on a JJ Abrams show, there are a lot of secrets. What can I tell you without being shot? For me, the highlight of this show is continuing to see the evolution in the relationship between Dorian [Michael Ealy] and John [Urban] and to see how the cases that they work on personally affect them. We want to deliver a show that is fun, full

of action and something that, when it works at its best, examines really what it means to be human.

In the show, human cops are forced to partner up with androids. Is it questioning where machine stops and man begins?

Yeah, I think *Almost Human* should give a good dose of thought provocation, whether about the rights of your

ALMOST HUMAN SHOULD GIVE A GOOD DOSE OF THOUGHT PROVOCATION

KATIA WINTER

computer – I mean, that's essentially what these androids are, walking computers – and if you have something with an artificial life, then where does that come into play? We have human rights. It opens up a whole interesting argument.

Do fans recognise you more from *Dredd*, *Almost Human* or *Star Trek*?

That's what blows me away, when people recognise me from *Dredd* – I've got a helmet on the entire time. I was in Vancouver not too long ago, and a guy was, 'Oh, my God, Judge Dredd.' I'm like, 'How does he...?' It always amazes me.

Almost Human will air on Watch in May.

How will Ichabod and Abbie escape their respective predicaments?



SLEEPY HOLLOW SERIES 2: "JENNY COULD BE DEAD"

Lyndie Greenwood reveals all about the first season cliffhanger WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Sleepy Hollow's first season finale was one hell of a cliffhanger: Ichabod Crane (Tom Mison) buried alive, his wife Katrina (Katia Winter) kidnapped by the Horseman, Abbie Mills (Nicole Beharie) trapped in Purgatory, and her sister Jenny (Lyndie Greenwood) left in a terrible car accident, her fate unknown.

"Nauseating!" is how Greenwood describes the finale. However, the actress behind *Sleepy Hollow*'s Sarah Connor-esque apocalypse-fighter been promoted to series regular for Season Two along with John Noble, which must have been reassuring. "All the producers were like, 'Don't worry, Jenny's coming back, Jenny's coming back,'" she laughs. "I had no faith in that until I found out for sure that I was."

However, "coming back" is a different proposition in *Sleepy Hollow*. Just because

we'll be seeing Jenny again, it doesn't mean that she'll have a heartbeat. "I still don't know what's up with Jenny, the cliffhanger stands for me as well," Greenwood tells us. "She could be dead because on this show we have many characters that die and still come back, so the fact that I'm series regular doesn't necessarily mean that Jenny's alive!"

Whether living or undead, one thing is for sure: Jenny Mills will be back to face the End Times alongside Abbie and Ichabod, and Greenwood teases that we might find out exactly how she gained her evil-fighting expertise. "Jenny has a lot to bring to the table, and I'm really excited to see more of how she gained all of this knowledge, how she prepared herself for all of these years."

Sleepy Hollow returns to Universal Channel this autumn.

SEASON FOUR
SPOILER
ALERT!

A STORM OF SWORDS

“THERE’S NEVER
GOING TO BE A
HAPPY WEDDING
IN KING’S
LANDING

LIAM CUNNINGHAM

THE WEDDING’S OFF!

Why you should never get married in Game Of Thrones

INTERVIEW KRISTAL SIM WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

If you’re not up to date with *Game Of Thrones* then you’re going to want to stop reading NOW. If you’re taking advantage of the fact that we’re getting our George RR Martin hit on the same day as the US now – well, you will understand why the cast of the show get a bit tense when they see a wedding coming up.

“There’s never going to be a happy wedding in King’s Landing, is there?” laughs Liam Cunningham, whose Ser Davos Seaworth has managed to avoid being invited to any of these occasions.

“There’s never going to be a happy wedding in drama,” opines John Bradley, who plays Night’s Watchman Samwell Tarly. “Weddings are always so fraught in real life, if you have so many high-strung characters then things are going to kick off big time.” “You usually don’t end up with 25 dead bodies,” counters Cunningham.

With Joffrey Baratheon finally shoved off the Iron Throne and the mortal coil thanks to some well-placed poison, the balance of power in Westeros is looking more fragile than ever. The showrunners promised that we’d be getting some big surprises early on, and we’ve had another reminder that no one is safe. Cunningham knows how he’d like Davos to die: “Of old age.”

There’s going to come a time when the books are no longer the most reliable source

of spoilers. The HBO show is outpacing the novels to such an extent that they’ll start lapping them, and showrunners David Benioff and DB Weiss have met Martin to get the basics of the finale hammered out. “The two are in possession of most of the facts, where it’s going to finish,” Cunningham reveals. “I think chronologically we’re gonna overtake George. They have it in broad strokes. But it ain’t gonna go to 15 seasons, unfortunately.”

The show has already set a precedent for diverging from the novels, as Cunningham points out. “In the Red Wedding, Oona Chaplin’s character, Robb Stark’s pregnant wife – in the books she goes home, and people who’ve read the books and thought they were a big know-it-all, they killed her first. So it’s still a surprise for people who’ve read the books – a nice bonus for them.”

As for the grand finale of the show, Cunningham has a pessimistic but eerily plausible prediction. “There’s a line from Ramsay Snow: ‘If you think this is going to have a happy ending, you haven’t been paying attention’” he tells us. “I have this image in my head of a White Walker sitting on the Iron Throne, kind of casual with his leg over it.”

Game Of Thrones Season Four is currently airing on Sky Atlantic.

PETER JACKSON GETS WHAT EPIC MEANS

HERE BE DRAGONS

THE HOBBIT 3

Weta's Daniel Falconer tells us why Smaug is the one to watch in *The Hobbit: There And Back Again* WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

When we last saw the great dragon Smaug, he had spread his wings and taken flight for Laketown to wreak fiery vengeance. After years of waiting, we'd finally got a good look at JRR Tolkien's fearsome creature, and we were impressed. "This dragon had to be truly jaw-dropping in every way," explains Weta designer Daniel Falconer. "There have been many great dragons on our screens over the years, but I personally always felt that many of them owed a lot to what Tolkien imbued in Smaug."

Fans were almost unanimous in their praise, particularly when it came to Benedict Cumberbatch's motion-capture turn. "Benedict could create not just the voice of Smaug, but also an entire body performance, like a kind of extremely minimalist one-man stage show!" enthuses Falconer. However, given that dragons have several characteristics that humans don't, such as being able to soar above a town, wings unfurled, Falconer reveals that the designers looked elsewhere for some key movement, much of which we'll see in *The Hobbit: There And Back Again*.

"There are certain physical limitations to what a person can do in terms of approximating a reptilian style of movement," he tells us. "So while Benedict could pose magnificently, sometimes doing so might affect

his vocal delivery – simply because humans have a different physiology. In the end, the animators also had to look beyond Benedict and apply what could be learned from observing crocodiles, bats, eagles, snakes, komodo dragons and other animals from which dragons like Smaug have borrowed anatomical features. They choreographed rich, character-filled and nuanced animated characterisation by combining inspiration gleaned from many sources."

We'll also be getting a good look at him in full flight. After watching him chase Bilbo, Thorin and company around the mines of the Lonely Mountain, we have an idea of just how massive he is. However, the challenges of bringing that massive creation to life will surely only grow now that he's left to deliver his wrath on the outside world.

"Peter Jackson imagined Smaug on a truly colossal scale," agrees Falconer. "If he were a living, physical being he could stretch out his wings to shade a 747 jumbo-jet under each one with room to spare, but the camera also had to be able to get close to him, zooming in on his bus-sized head or just his eye and still read detail and complexity."

We're still several months away from the conclusion to the *Hobbit* saga, but we can't wait to return to Middle-Earth and get another look at quite possibly the greatest dragon to

date. "I think we are drawn to dragons because throughout our histories and fantasies we have tended to ascribe great power to them," says Falconer. "Something Benedict Cumberbatch said really struck a chord with me when he observed that Smaug's allure is seductive. The power and superiority he exudes over everything else in his world is seductive, but also corrupting. So I think part of Smaug's specialness and why we were all so looking forward to seeing him on the big screen has to do with several decades' worth of build-up."

"We have seen so many wonderful dragons, but this guy is the grand-daddy of western fantasy wyrms. I am not sure any of us quite imagined him as vast as Peter Jackson, and I know I was a little shocked when he started talking about making the dragon so huge. But that's part of Peter's genius as a director and filmmaker. He truly gets what epic means, and is good at using it to great effect in his films."



The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug is available on 3D, Blu-ray and DVD. *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug - Unleashing The Dragon* by Daniel Falconer, a companion book to the *Hobbit Chronicle* series, is also out now.

DM
WW





Daniel Falconer's book depicts the creation process of one of cinema's most impressive dragons.



MONKEY BUSINESS



SERKIS ATTRACTION

Andy Serkis on Gollum, Caesar and *The Jungle Book*

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

"I don't think Gollum will ever go away, quite frankly!" says *The Hobbit* star Andy Serkis, whose performance as the schizophrenic ring junkie rocketed him to fame. "There was always the possibility of him coming back before *The Hobbit*, but I'm happy to have left him in a good place – buried underneath the Misty Mountains," he laughs.

For now, Serkis is embodying a very different kind of creature as the chimpanzee Caesar in *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*. In the first movie, we saw him grow from an infant who believed he was a human to an outsider that galvanises the apes and leads them to freedom. Serkis says the next stage plays a key part in the character's evolution: "We move forward ten years, and he's created a community of chimpanzees, gorillas and oranges," he explains. "At the beginning of the movie you believe you're watching the dawning of

society, but that's interrupted by the arrival of human beings that the apes believed had diminished."

In between keeping the peace between two civilisations in *Apes*, Serkis has also signed on to direct Warner Bros' live-action take on Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The script has been penned by Callie Kloves, the daughter of *Harry Potter* screenwriter Steve Kloves, who is attached as producer. In an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*, Serkis revealed the adaptation is "very truthful" to the original novel and "it doesn't shy away from darkness." This will be the actor's directorial debut, after being in charge of the second unit on Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy. "Peter knew I wanted to direct for a long time," he added. "Now I feel ready to take on anything."

Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes will be released on 17 July.

'I suppose you might say, that I am a citizen of the universe, and a gentleman to boot'

The Doctor, *The Daleks' Masterplan*

VAMPIRE ACADEMY

STAGE FRIGHT

Let *The Right One In* hits the stage INTERVIEW JODIE TYLEY

The Fades' creator Jack Thorne is the writer of the moment. Not only has he been enlisted to pen the script for the big-screen version of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, but his adaptation of John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let The Right One In* is currently showing in the West End.

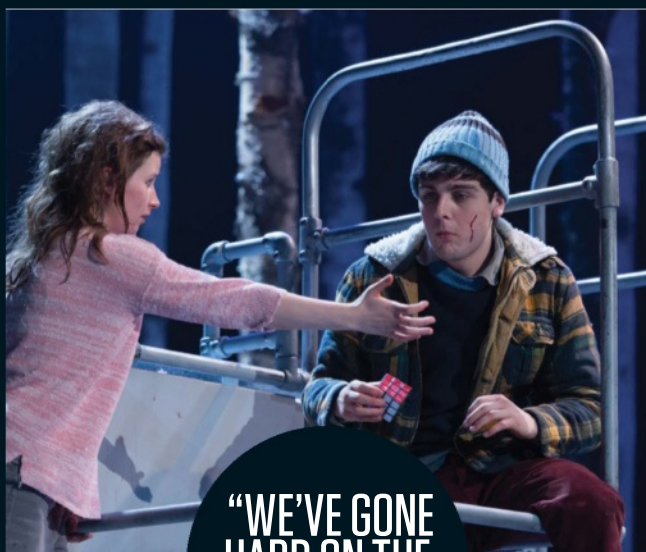
Just like the original Swedish novel, the film and the US remake, the stage play tells the story of the relationship between bullied schoolboy Oskar and an enigmatic, pale young girl who moves in next door. They haven't skimped on the gruesome parts either, according to Thorne: "We've gone hard on the horror. It's pretty nasty at times, which is why it's for over 13s only."

Part of the mission in adapting this story was to attract a younger audience to the theatre, and Thorne has sat in the stalls enough times to know that the mission has been accomplished. "I've

sat with the audience about 20 times!" he admits. "There's been screams, ahhs, laughter, all sorts of reactions – and it's been great to see the theatre filled with under 20-year olds."

The experience of converting the story to the stage will undoubtedly help in Thorne's next undertaking: shrinking 75 *Sandman* issues into one feature-length film. It seems that what draws him to a project is the story, "One thing I tried to do on *The Fades* was set up a new mythology, and I didn't think there was anything else that could be done with vampires. But John Lindqvist found a way to do something extraordinary with a pre-existing myth, and I was blown away by it."

Let The Right One In will be playing at the Royal Court Theatre in London until 27 September.



"WE'VE GONE
HARD ON THE
HORROR"

JACK THORNE



Age Of Extinction sees Optimus Prime team up with Mark Wahlberg himself.





RUNNING WITH DINOSAURS

TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTITEMENT

INTERVIEW
STEVEN NASH

Mark Wahlberg and Nicola Peltz on why Transformers 4 will change everything

There are few certainties in life, but when it comes to a *Transformers* movie you can count on Autobots clashing with Decepticons, colossal explosions and a gorgeous girl running for her life. In the past, an oily Megan Fox and pouting Rosie Huntington-Whiteley have come under fire not just from giant robots, but for being over-sexualised in a family friendly film.

But *Bates Motel* star Nicola Peltz doesn't think it will be an issue: "In this movie, Tessa is younger [about 17-years old], and there is a beautiful father/daughter story. That's why I was so

excited to do it, because it's so relatable." That's not to say she won't scream and still look great, though: "[Director] Michael [Bay] has an amazing eye," she continues. "He is such a genius and he shoots women so beautifully. He does the Victoria's Secret commercials!"

In *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*, Mark Wahlberg plays her father, and it turns out that the pair go way back, as the actor revealed: "I have known her since she was about 12," says Wahlberg. "I knew we would have great chemistry and that she would be a pain in my ass on many days, and give me crap when I am not in the mood for it – she is feisty."

It turns out that her character Tessa is much the same, as Peltz describes her as a "strong girl with lots of guts."

The family's life is, er, transformed when Wahlberg's character, Cade Yeager, buys a truck for scrap that turns out to be Optimus Prime himself. It's hoped that this family format will work for the foreseeable future, as Peltz has confirmed that she has signed on for three movies right off the bat: "It was a very easy decision. I was so excited, so hopefully I will still be in the next two."

Transformers: Age Of Extinction will be released on 10 July.

HOT NEWS

Transformers: Age Of Extinction



WALKING WITH DINOBOTS

Your guide to the Dinobots

GRIMLOCK

The leader of the Dinobots is naturally a Tyrannosaurus Rex. In the trailer he can be seen charging towards Optimus Prime.



STRAFE

The two-headed Pteranodon has been spotted carrying Bumblebee away from danger. In Generation 1, the flying Dinobot was named Swoop.



SLUG

There hasn't been any footage released of the Triceratops transformer, but in the toy line-up he appears to be Autobot Drift's ride. His original name was Slag, as in the byproduct of molten metal.



SLASH

The Velociraptor is an entirely new Dinobot, and while there are toy versions of him, we don't have confirmation that he's in the movie yet.



SCORN

Another likely Dinobot is the Spinosaurus called Scorn. He's an original creation, but in the past the form of a Spinosaurus has been used by the Transformer Undermine.



Images from Hasbro's Generations Deluxe Class line of merchandise.

BOX OFFICE BAYHEM

Who comes out on top in the battle for box office booty?

TRANSFORMERS:
DARK OF THE MOON
(2011)
\$319,246,193

TRANSFORMERS
(2007)
\$352,390,543

TRANSFORMERS:
REVENGE OF THE
FALLEN (2009)
\$402,111,870

'There are some corners of the universe which have bred the most terrible things. Things which act against everything that we believe in. They must be fought.'

The Doctor, *The Moonbase*

DOCTOR
WHO

@DWBBCBooks

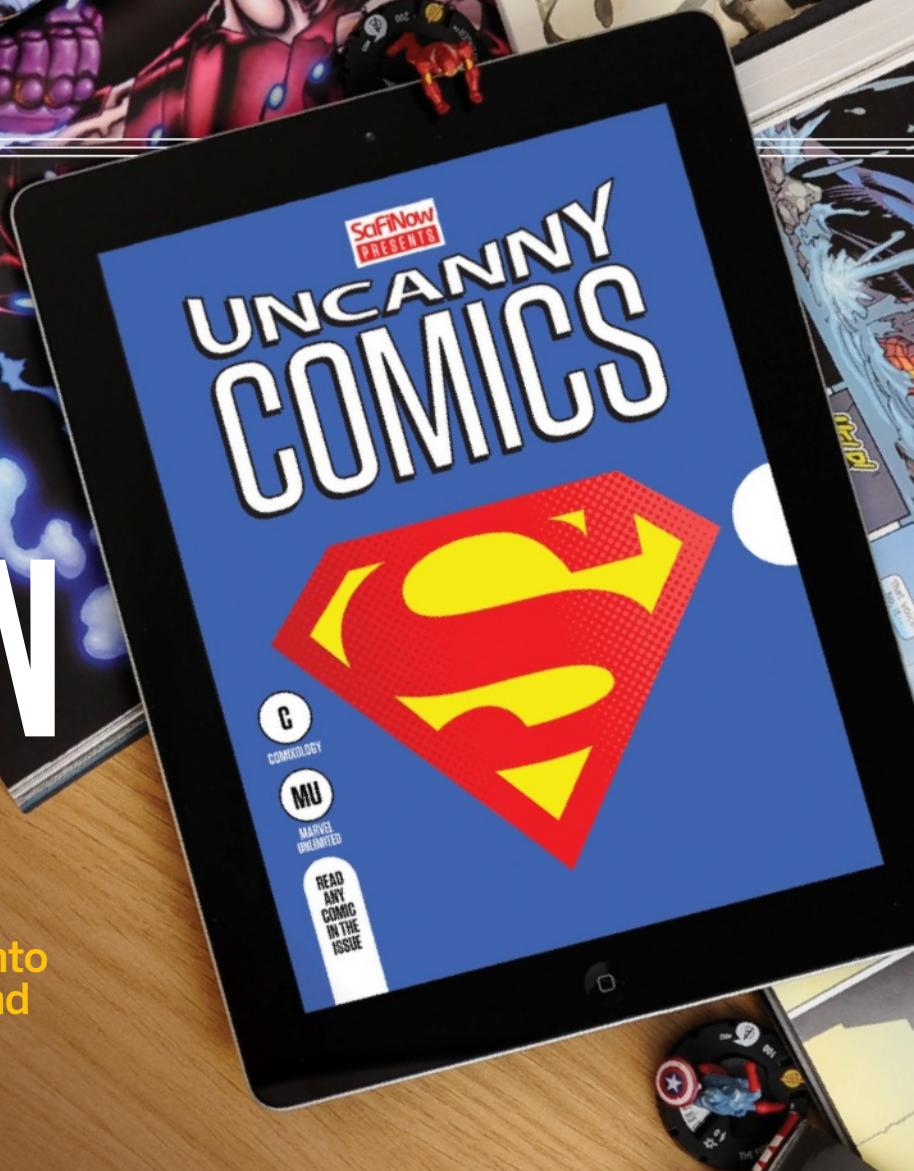
BBC
BOOKS

GET UNCANNY COMICS ISSUE 3 NOW FOR ONLY 69P OR 99C FROM APPLE'S NEWSSTAND

SUPERMAN RETURNS!

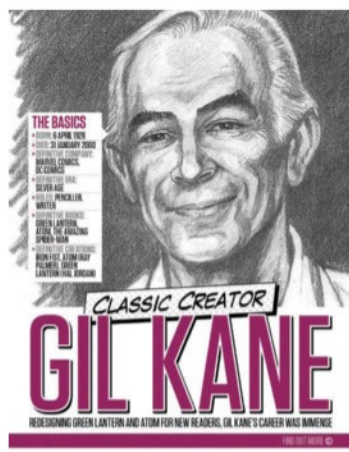
Uncanny Comics issue 3 can leap into your iPad or iPhone in a single bound

Man Of Steel may have upset comic fans but there's nothing contentious about **Uncanny Comics** issue 3, out now for iPad and iPhone. Here're four reasons why you need to download the awesome new issue right this second:



1 IT'S GOT THE BIGGEST INTERVIEWS

We talk to powerhouse writer J Michael Straczynski about his bold reinvention in *Superman: Earth One* and discover why the Last Son of Krypton brought him knocking on DC's door.



2 IT'S GOT THE WILDEST HISTORY

Discover the weirdest *Thor* comic you'll ever read, Jack Kirby's strangest contribution to the *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the amazing career of the late, great Gil Kane. Uncanny Comics is packed with lost classics and retro gems.



3 IT'S GOT THE HOTTEST PREVIEWS

From IDW's *Judge Dredd* to Marvel's *She-Hulk*, from the pulp sci-fi nostalgia of *Starlight* to the gristly epic horror of *American Vampire: The Second Cycle*, find out the best new comics you should be reading right now.



4 IT COSTS LESS THAN COMICS DO

At only 60p or 99 cents for a 30-day subscriptions (which lets you read all three issues so far!), it's incredible value for money. Why spend \$2.99 on a comic when you can spend 99c to find out whether it's good?

FLAME ON

PASSING ON THE TORCH

Chris Evans admits to feeling “precious” about *Fantastic Four*’s Johnny Storm

WORDS JODIE TYLEY

He may be the First Avenger, but Chris Evans still carries a torch for an old flame. As Johnny Storm, aka the Human Torch, the actor was one of the best things about the *Fantastic Four* (2005) and *Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer* (2007) movies, and it turns out Evans was pretty fond of him too.

While speaking with *NY Daily News*, he admitted that seeing his role in the rebooted franchise go to *Chronicle* star Michael B Jordan was bittersweet. “You almost feel precious over the role that you don’t want someone else to do it,” he said. “But when you hear someone phenomenal is doing it, it’s very exciting like you almost can’t wait. I know he’s going to reinvent it in a way that I could never have imagined. It’s almost like we’re sharing; the character is ours. I feel like I’m connected with him in a way. It’s a nice feeling.”

Jordan is just as excited by the prospect of playing the hot-headed younger brother

of Susan Storm. “It feels good,” he says. “We haven’t started filming yet, but just the idea of it, you know? As a kid growing up, I was always reading comic-books and wanted to indulge in that world of Marvel, so it’s kind of cool to see it come true. I’m excited to start filming *The Fantastic Four*, the Human Torch is one of my favourite characters, and it’s going to be fun to show a lighter, funnier side of me that I don’t really get to show on screen.”

Chronicle director Josh Trank is helping the reboot that, just like Marc Webb’s *Amazing Spider-Man* do-over, is coming ten years after the original adaptation. Costume fittings are already underway, and Jordan hints at fantastic things to come: “You guys are in for a treat,” he says. “Josh has been taking his time on it and doing something special.” Flame on.

The Fantastic Four is coming in 2015.



‘I can’t tell the future,
I just work there’

The Doctor, *The Bells of Saint John*

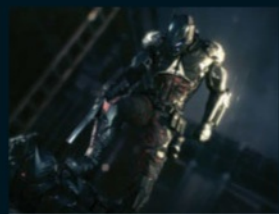
HOT TOPICS

Your most-read posts on
SciFiNow.co.uk



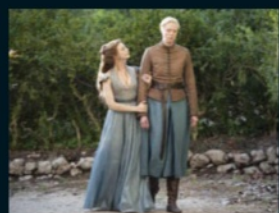
SUPERNATURAL SEASON 9 WON'T AIR IN THE UK?

tinyurl.com/SkySPN9



WHO ON EARTH IS THE ARKHAM KNIGHT?

tinyurl.com/KnightTheory



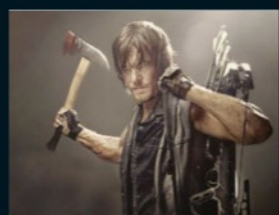
GAME OF THRONES SEASON 4: JAMIE LOVES BRIENNE

tinyurl.com/GOTBrienne



UNDERWORLD 5 IS COMING, AND THIS IS TERRIBLE NEWS

tinyurl.com/UnderV



NORMAN REEDUS ON LEAVING THE WALKING DEAD

tinyurl.com/ReedusOut

COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

Send your cosplay to @SciFiNow
or Facebook.com/SciFiNow



PSYLOCKE (X-MEN)

COSPLAYER: DEE LA BEU **FROM:** NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, UK **COSPLAYING FOR:** TWO YEARS **PHOTO BY:** GRAHAM SHORT (WWW.DURHAMPHOTOGRAPHER.WORDPRESS.COM)

1 THE CHARACTER

"Graham – the photographer – and I did a Green Lantern shoot a while back, which involved a lot of planning but went really well. We sort of choose Psylocke together, me because she's hot and Graham because of the Photoshop opportunities. Apart from the fact she's a superhero, I identify with her a bit. I went through a phase where I died my hair purple, I model (when I can fit it around work, parenting and playing dress up!). I also like the idea of being telepathic, as it would be more effective than

holding my arm towards the remote while covered in cats and grunting, which is my 'poor man's telepathy'. We knew that her psychic weaponry would add something to the images. Plus, she attempted to seduce Cyclops while in someone else's body – I like that sneaky stuff and I don't like Jean Grey!"

2 THE MATERIAL

"I wanted an outfit that was shiny, and spandex fits the bill. I contemplated getting this costume made in latex, but I'm glad I didn't. The only downside of ordering from China is that the sizes can be unpredictable.

and with this one the costume was too large. The straps came with the bodysuit, and were somewhat annoying. I had to keep tugging them – I'd probably alter them if I wore this again."

3 THE HAIR

"I got the wig from eBay. I wanted bright violet purple, but in a comic sort of hair style, so a bit *Charlie's Angels*! It was pot luck, because the images are misleading and you don't know what you're going to get!"

4 THE BELT

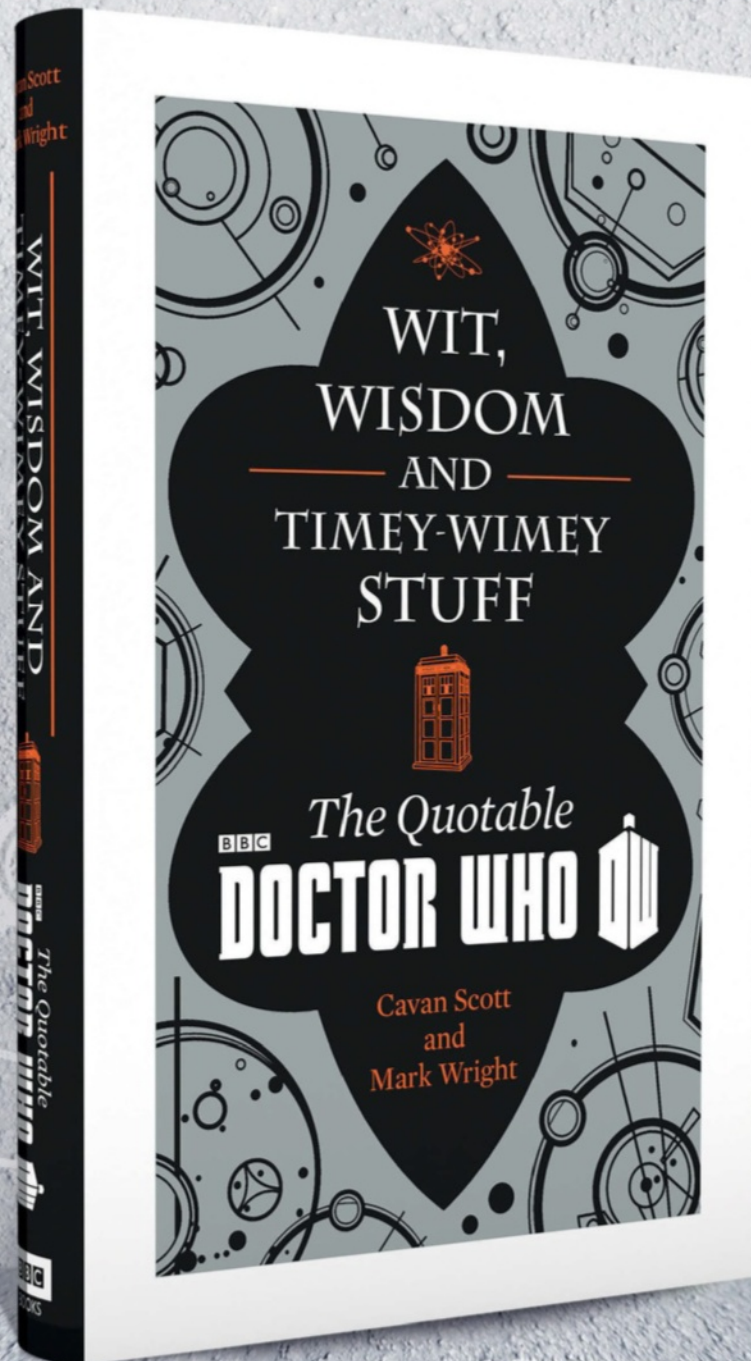
"I made the belt with fabric from a haberdashery. I

didn't have time to hem it, but I don't think you can tell. You can't see it in the picture but I got an X-Men belt buckle custom-made by my talented friend Jez at Ancestor Leathercrafts, but it's cool because I'm doing a Jubilee cosplay soon, and I can use it again for that."

5 THE SWORD

"The sword in its normal form is a just one of those curved, thin Oriental ones. I'm not up on weapons. It's barely recognisable with the photoshop makeover. Graham also shone a pink light onto my hand to create my hand dagger thing."

Your indispensable guide to
life, love, mirth and monsters.



Collecting half a century of **quips** and **quotes**,
and **beautifully illustrated** throughout

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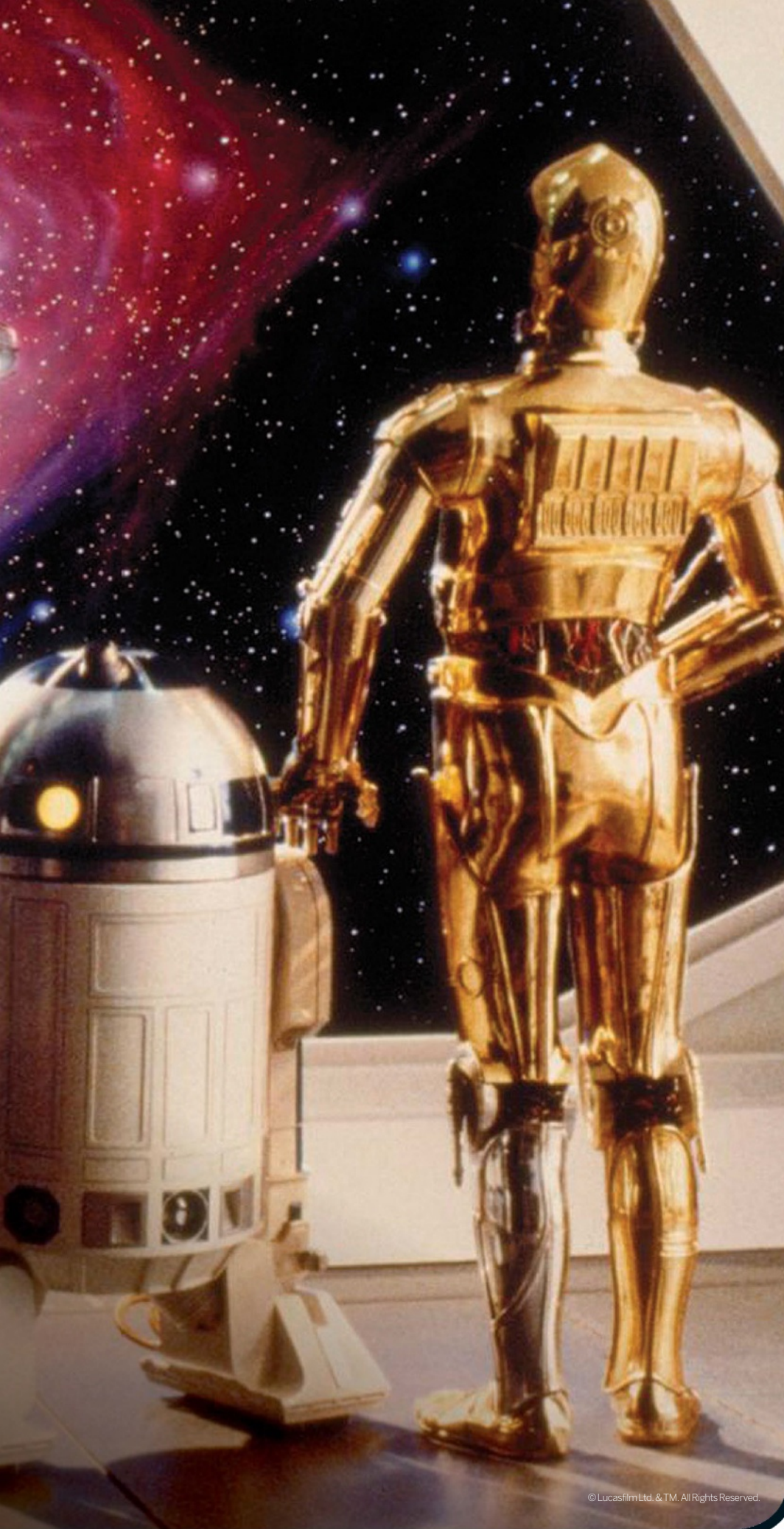
STAR WARS

EPIISODE VII



AS STAR WARS: EPISODE VII STARTS FILMING THIS MONTH, WE DEBUNK THE RUMOURS
AND SEEK OUT THE TRUTH BEHIND SCIENCE FICTION'S BIGGEST COMEBACK...

WORDS JODIE TYLEY, JONATHAN HATFULL



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KEY

PURPLE BAD-ASS TRUTH **GREEN** PROBABLE
BLUE ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN **RED** LOAD OF SITH

IN A GALAXY NOT SO FAR AWAY

Episode VII will be set 30 years after *Return Of The Jedi* (1983), which concluded with the death of Darth Vader, along with the revelation that Luke was Leia's brother. This timeline fits with the actual ages of the original cast.



BACK IN FORCE

Never one to keep quiet, Carrie Fisher spilled that she, Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill are due to start work on *Episode VII*. It's been suggested that the core trio will take on Obi-Wan type roles mentoring young Jedi Knights. These are likely to include Han Solo and Leia Organa's offspring: twins Jacen and Jaina, and Anakin, and perhaps even their cousin Ben Skywalker.

Hamill told *Entertainment Tonight* how he imagined Luke's story would pan out: "When I found out [while making the original trilogy] that ultimate good news/bad news joke – the good news is there's a real attractive, hot girl in the universe; the bad news is she's your sister – I thought, 'Well, I'm going to wind up like Sir Alec [Guinness]. I'm going to be a lonely old hermit living out in some kind of desert igloo with a couple of robots.'"

CHEW- BACK

"There will be some very familiar faces along with a trio of new young leads," said Walt Disney CEO Bob Iger, and it turns out they're willing to rewrite canon to do it. Word is that Chewbacca will return, despite dying in a feat of self-sacrifice in RA Salvatore's novel *Vector Prime* (1999).

It seems likely that 69-year-old actor Peter Mayhew will shrug on the shaggy suit, since he cancelled an appearance at a Texas convention "due to filming". The con took place during May, so naturally we're hoping that the bromance between Han Solo and his furry co-pilot will be rekindled in the cockpit of the Millennium Falcon.

Mayhew even teased fans on Twitter (@TheWookieeRoars), saying: "I know you've heard the rumours, and a lot of you are asking. So I would like to go ahead and confirm... that I WILL be appearing at Supanova in Melbourne!" Nuuwah ughghhgh huurh.



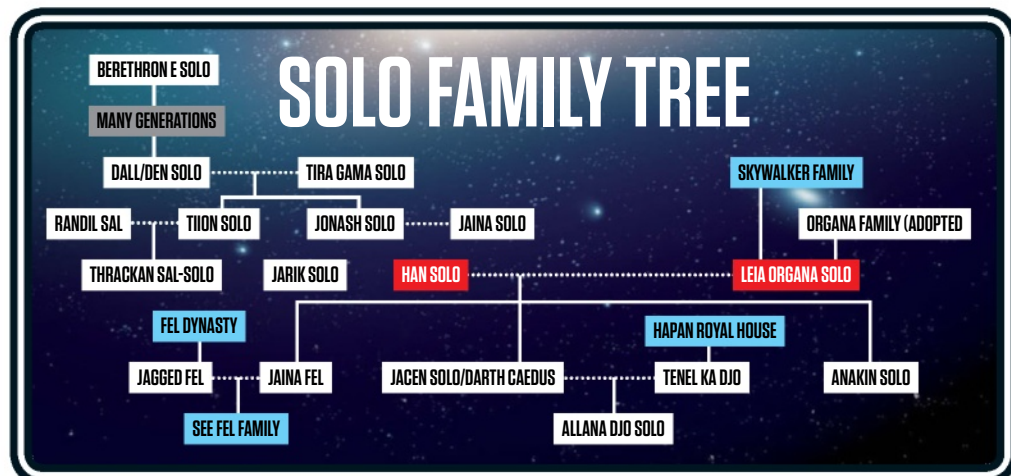
THE NEXT GENERATION

In keeping with *Star Wars* tradition, *Episode VII* promises to be a story about families. We've seen Luke and Vader, and Boba and Jango Fett, so it's highly likely that this instalment will hinge on the Solos, Skywalker and their children. According to *Heat Vision*, the screenplay will give fans "one more chance to enjoy [the original stars] before a fitting send-off," paving the way for the younger cast to take centre stage in the two subsequent episodes. Other theories suggest that one of the main three could meet their demise at the hands of the Dark Side, sending the youngsters on a quest for justice in future films.

KASDAN SAVED STAR WARS

Director JJ Abrams drafted in Lawrence Kasdan to co-write the script. He says it was the only way to meet Disney's ambitious 2016 release date: "Working with Lawrence Kasdan, especially on a *Star Wars* movie, is unbeatable," he says. "It became clear that given the time frame, the process and the way the thing was going that working with Larry was going to get us where we need to be and when we needed to be."

Kasdan replaced original *Episode VII* screenwriter Michael Arndt, who recently worked on *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. "That doesn't preclude working with Michael again in the future, at all," adds Abrams. "I couldn't say enough good things about him. He's one of the smartest guys, and one of the best writers around."





BUNS STRIKE BACK

Star Wars royalty Fisher has already had some thoughts on what she might look like in her grand return to the franchise. "I'd like to wear my old [cinnamon buns] hairstyle again – but with white hair," she told *TV Guide*. "I think that would be funny." Always up for a laugh, the 57-year-old actress made a recent cameo in *The Big Bang Theory* alongside fellow *Star Wars* alumni James Earl Jones (the voice of Darth Vader).

Fisher played Princess Leia in the three original films (*A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*), as well as TV spinoff *The Holiday Special* in 1978. But if you want a more recent peek at Fisher stepping back into her role, watch the video from *Star Wars Celebration Europe*, where she re-enacts an iconic scene with Warwick Davis (playing the Ewok Wicket).



"I'D LIKE TO WEAR MY OLD HAIRSTYLE AGAIN – BUT WITH WHITE HAIR"

CARRIE FISHER

STAR WARS

The Enquiring Padawan's Handbook

DRIVE ANGRY

Why Girls star Adam Driver is the perfect choice to bring the Dark Side



Adam Driver, as seen in HBO's *Girls*.

It's easy to imagine that there's a list somewhere in Hollywood that gets pulled out of a drawer whenever there's a big blockbuster in need of a villain. When JJ Abrams needed a bad guy for *Episode VII*, we saw the usual names flying around. Gary Oldman was one – an interesting choice given that

he'd turned down the role of General Grievous in the prequel trilogy. Michael Fassbender was linked, and at the time of writing still pops up in casting rumour round-ups. Even Benedict Cumberbatch was rumoured, which would have displayed an amazing lack of imagination given his recent turn as KHAAAAAAN in Abrams' *Star Trek Into Darkness*.

However, the spotlight eventually fell on a 30-year-old character actor with a relatively short list of credits who is currently best known for playing Lena Dunham's half-Neanderthal, half-poet boyfriend in HBO's *Girls*. Although the bulk of the press surrounding the show has understandably focused on Dunham, Driver's pitch-perfect performances have consistently drawn raves as he steers between likeable and unlikeable behaviour to portray that rare thing: a recognisable human being. He has since appeared in arthouse smashes *Frances Ha* and *Inside Llewyn Davis*, and has Jeff Nichols' John Carpenter sci-fi tribute *Midnight Special* coming up. Oh, and he was in Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*.

The show has often called upon Driver to take his character to dark places, using his physicality and unpredictability to make Adam brutally honest, unnerving, upsetting and occasionally dangerous. It's safe to assume that Abrams will be using these qualities – rather than his ability to portray sweet sincerity and dogged commitment – in his role as *Episode VII*'s villain.

As to who that villain is – well, that's another question. The *Variety* report that broke the news of his casting has remained unrefuted, if not confirmed, and it describes his role as being "in the vein of iconic *Star Wars* villain Darth Vader." While it's entirely possible that Abrams, Lawrence Kasdan and Michael Arndt have created a new Sith Lord for Driver to sink his teeth into, there are also a couple of options from the pre-existing universe that could be making a surprise appearance.

Given that *Episode VII* is getting the family back together for a story about the Skywalker children, Han and Leia's son Jacen Solo, aka Darth Caedus, would be an interesting proposition, with his ferocious drive to save the galaxy twisted into darkness by the Sith. His dogged self-belief could be used to good effect as the fanatical Darth Krayt, or even Nammu Cha, whose pursuit of relics of the Sith makes him a dangerous foe.

Whichever villain Driver is given, one thing is for sure. To quote Lena Dunham's congratulatory tweet, "We're VERY proud of Adam Driver. He's about to rip a hole in da force. Is that a thing? I guess I should see those movies?" Yes to all of the above.

COVER STORY

Star Wars: Episode VII

MONEY TALK

The budget is estimated at \$200 million, but given the crazy love for this franchise, experts think it may rival Disney's other blockbuster, *Avengers Assemble*, for the box office crown.

BOX OFFICE WARS

How the movies performed worldwide*

*Adjusted for ticket price inflation



TATOOINE IS RECREATED

The home planet of Luke Skywalker has been recreated for *Episode VII* in a “Morocco-like environment”, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*. The original was built in Tunisia, with the famous Hôtel Sidi Driss in Matmata doubling as Skywalker’s home.

The decision to rebuild Tatooine fits with Lucasfilm head Kathleen Kennedy’s promise to keep digital renders to a minimum: “The conversation we’re having all the time now about *Episode VII* is how much CGL,” she says. “We’re looking at what the early *Star Wars* films did; they used real locations with special effects. So [for *Episode VII*] we’re going to find some very cool locations – we’re going to end up using every single tool in the toolbox.” Despite it being the best part of 40 years since *A New Hope* was released, it seems that this sequel will have more in common with the original than the prequels.

REBEL YELL

We take a look at the new animated series, *Star Wars: Rebels*

From *Clone Wars* showrunner Dave Filoni comes animated series *Star Wars: Rebels*. It follows the evil Galactic Empire as it tightens its grip on the galaxy – a dark time that Filoni is thrilled to explore: “We have done the Republic and a lot of the things that have foreshadowed the coming Empire, but we had never really done TIE Fighters, Stormtroopers or Imperials, and that’s something we’re having a great time doing this season,” he says.

As the series begins, Imperial forces have taken control of the planet Lothal. But there are those who are willing to stand up to them, like the crew of the starship Ghost, who will be squaring up against some familiar faces, as well as a few new ones. “Fans love the Empire, they’re great bad guys,” continues Filoni. “They’ve got the look, they’ve got great designs, and they’re famous for saying things like, ‘You Rebel scum!’ It’s great to have those characters back in play.”

“EVERY ERA OF A STAR WARS SAGA SEEMS TO HAVE THEIR OWN MARQUEE VILLAIN”

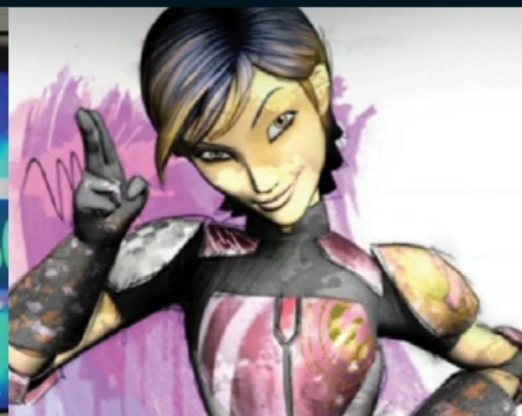
The storyline takes place between the first two film trilogies, and introduces a never-before-seen villain. “Every era of a *Star Wars* saga seems to have their own marquee villain,” explains Filoni, “a character that really captures the idea of the enemy and what evil is. For most people I know,

when Darth Vader hits the scene he is the preeminent and the only one, but in this time period there is the possibility that there are villainous characters that you have – up until now – been unaware of.” The antagonist is known as the Inquisitor, and like Starkiller in *The Force Unleashed* videogame, he answers to Vader. He is tasked with hunting down the Jedi who survived the Jedi Purge.

With the Rebels is Sabine. Voiced by Tiya Sircar, she’s a spunky Mandalorian with attitude. “With that comes a great understanding of weapons and arms,” he says. “She’s definitely one who’s turned against the Empire, and that’s going to be to the Rebels’ benefit.” She also likes to blow things up, but does so with flair. “The Imperials often know when the Rebels have attacked because Sabine like to tag their site,” he adds, referring to her love of graffiti. She will be joined by Zeb, the Ghost’s gunner (Steve Blum); Ezra Bridger, a renegade Imperial cadet (Taylor Gray) and Kanan Jarrus (Freddie Prinze Jr), a survivor of the Purge. Fans will also recognise Billy Dee Williams as Lando Calrissian.

Unlike Disney’s *Agents Of SHIELD* on ABC, this XD series will be shooting straight for young Padawans. That’s not to say it won’t appeal to their parents, though, as Filoni adds: “It reminds us all of a time we knew as kids, when the Empire were the bad guys, and now they’re coming back in a big way.”

Star Wars: Rebels will air on Disney XD later this year.



WHO'S WHO

Introducing the major players who are shaping Star Wars' future

JJ ABRAMS

Director

It took a lot of sweet-talking for Kathleen Kennedy to persuade Abrams to hop aboard the Millennium Falcon. He's admitted to being a lifelong fan of *Star Wars*, unlike the *Star Trek* franchise that he recently helmed, so we know he'll be making any changes to the canon with the utmost respect.



KATHLEEN KENNEDY

Head of Lucasfilm

George Lucas' trusted friend and producer has been handed the reins to Lucasfilm. There are plans to release the new trilogy over a six-year period, with spin-off films in between. Kennedy has confirmed that the characters from the standalone movies won't appear in the saga episodes.



LELAND CHEE

Lucasfilm Story Group

George Lucas' canon hierarchy has been dropped in favour of one unified continuity in the run-up to *Episode VII*. Chee is part of that team in charge of classifying the canon, which can be taken from the Expanded Universe of books, games and comics and included in the future films.



LAWRENCE KASDAN

Screenwriter

The Empire Strikes Back and *Return Of The Jedi*'s Lawrence Kasdan will be working on the standalone movies, as well as *Episode VII*, along with *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* writer Simon Kinberg. These spin-offs will star famous *Star Wars* characters that are not part of the overall saga.

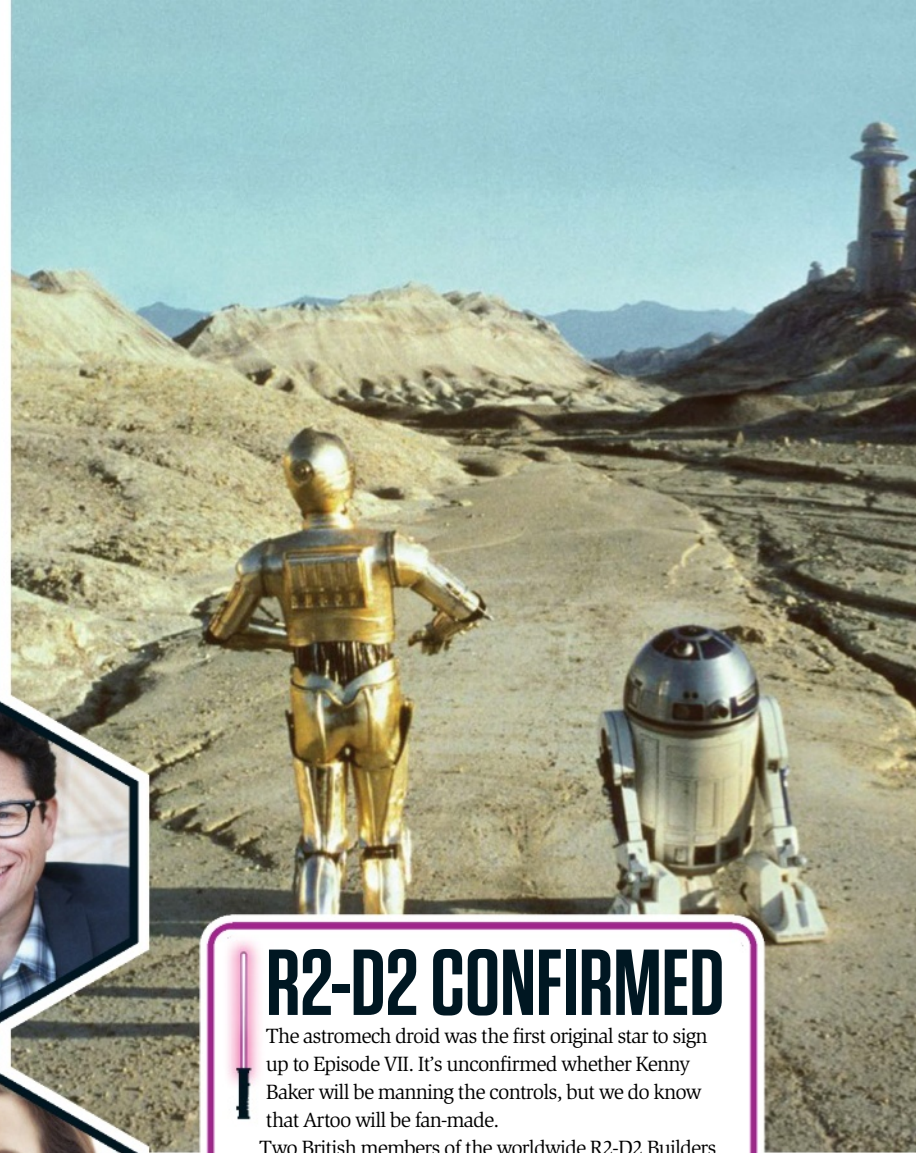


R2-D2 CONFIRMED

The astromech droid was the first original star to sign up to *Episode VII*. It's unconfirmed whether Kenny Baker will be manning the controls, but we do know that Artoo will be fan-made.

Two British members of the worldwide R2-D2 Builders Club, Lee Towersey and Oliver Steeples, officially became part of the creature effects team when Kathleen Kennedy saw the results of their efforts at last year's Celebration Europe in Germany.

STAR WARS
EPISODE VII
WILL BE RELEASED ON
18 DECEMBER
2015.



TALES FROM THE EXPANDED UNIVERSE

Examining what elements from the books and comics might be borrowed in *Star Wars: Episode VII*

KAREN GILLAN'S HAIR IN STARRING ROLE

Ever wondered where Karen Gillan's hair wound up? Apparently it wasn't in the bin. In an interview with *Collider*, the *Guardians Of The Galaxy* star said: "[Marvel] made my hair into the most incredible well-made wig and they gave it to the *Star Wars* people. It's just so funny to think that my hair is made into a wig, next to all these *Star Wars* monster heads in a warehouse." Could we be seeing the familiar swish of the flame-haired locks in the upcoming movie?

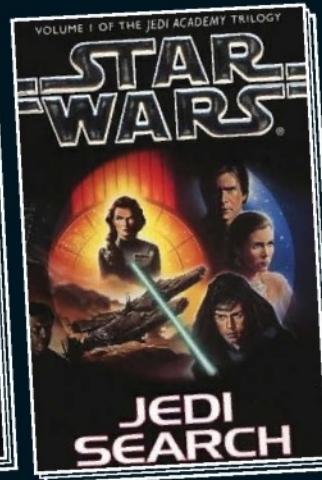
MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Oscar-winning composer John Williams returns to score the epic space saga. He's worked on all six films, and even hinted that we might hear some familiar sounds, telling *StarWars.com*: "I can't imagine there will not be some references to the existing stories that would make appropriate use of some of the earlier themes."



SOLO-SKYWALKER FAMILY

Leia and Han's son Jacen becomes central to the plot, starting off as a promising Jedi Knight who ends up like his grandfather, Darth Vader, when a series of awful events lead him to the Dark Side. Sibling-on-sibling 'saber battles would make for epic cinema.



NEW JEDI ORDER

When the Great Jedi Purge slashed the number of Jedi Knights, Luke Skywalker helped to restore them by establishing a Jedi training academy on Yavin 4. It became a target by enemies of the Republic, and led to them playing a major part in one of the most pivotal conflicts in the EU's history, the Yuuzhan Vong War.



DEATH OF A MAJOR CHARACTER

Chewbacca became the first main character from the original trilogy to die. If author RA Salvatore had his way it would have been Luke, but George Lucas wouldn't allow it. Perhaps he'll meet a similar fate in *Episode VII*, unless they finally get the go-ahead to kill Luke...



BRINGING BACK BOBA FETT

Boba became the star of his own series that told a variety of origin stories. There was the time he took his father's ship and armour, while another account featured him as a stormtrooper who killed his commanding officer. With a rumoured spin-off film, it looks like we could find out the truth.



MEET MARA JADE

From Palpatine's assassin to Luke's bride, Mara Jade played a prominent role in the EU. In the past, characters created in the books/comics have been borrowed for the prequel trilogy (see: Aayla Secura), so this isn't within the realms of impossibility. If she appears then we bet that Grand Admiral Thrawn won't be far behind.



RESURRECTING PALPATINE

Rumours that Ian McDiarmid was returning as the Sith Lord pointed to the EU storyline where he cheated death time and again. He would grow cloned bodies and project his consciousness onto them in what was a pretty naff storyline that we hope won't be resurrected.



YUUZHAN VONG AS VILLAINS

The pain-worshipping aliens were enduring baddies in the books, and could well be used in a long-arc story. It would be tricky to make these hideous creatures look realistic, but we'd love to see what a monster-loving director like Guillermo del Toro would do with them.

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SEE PAGE 43

EVOLVE OR DIE

SUPERHERO MOVIES HAVE CHANGED, AND THE X-MEN ARE CHANGING WITH THEM. DIRECTOR **BRYAN SINGER**, WRITER/PRODUCER **SIMON KINBERG** AND THE STARS OF **X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST** TAKE US THROUGH THE NEXT STAGE IN SUPERHUMAN EVOLUTION...

WORDS **JAMES HOARE**

AS NEW SPECIES ARE FORMED THROUGH NATURAL EVOLUTION, OTHERS WILL BECOME RARER AND RARER, AND FINALLY EXTINCT. THE FORMS WHICH STAND IN CLOSEST COMPETITION WITH THOSE UNDERGOING MODIFICATION AND improvement will naturally suffer most."

So wrote the father of evolution, 19th Century naturalist Charles Darwin. It's not for nothing that the quote sat neatly typed upon the frontispiece of a screenplay tweeted by *X-Men* director Bryan Singer.

The conflict between humans and the next stage of human evolution – mutants, super from birth, but not always heroes – is scoured deep into the *X-Men* canon. The first film opened with incredulous lawmakers discussing how to legislate

their way around the thorny issue of adamantium claws. Now, 14 years and four *X-Men* films (plus two *Wolverine* movies) later, and the issue is close to resolving itself courtesy of the Sentinels, mutant-hunting deathbots who have turned the near future into a bleak, battle-scarred dystopia.

Picking their way through the wasteland of 2024 are the scraps of mutant-kind, the remnants of the original X-Men last seen together in Brett Ratner's much-maligned *X-Men: The Last Stand*: Wolverine (Hugh Jackman), Professor X (Patrick Stewart), Storm (Halle Berry), Colossus (Daniel Cudmore), Iceman (Shawn Ashmore) and Kitty Pryde (Ellen Page), plus reformed arch-nemesis Magneto (Ian McKellen) and an all-new B-team of lesser-known

superhumans. They're not going to save the day, but they can save *a* day by propelling one of their number back through time to 1972 to stop or divert the Sentinel program masterminded by Bolivar Trask (Peter Dinklage) and unite mutantkind's opposing forces, the humanist – and depressed – Charles 'Professor X' Xavier (James McAvoy) and the absolutist – and imprisoned – Erik 'Magneto' Lehnsherr (Michael Fassbender), with Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence) trapped somewhere between their moral extremes.

It's not just mutants who need to adapt to survive, either. Bryan Singer and Sam Raimi kick-started the modern age of the superhero movie with 2000's *X-Men* and 2002's *Spider-Man*, but over a decade ➤





BIG MOVIE

X-Men: Days Of Future Past

"MY NEXT GOAL IS HOW DID THE X-MEN COME TOGETHER? WE DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT YET, AND THAT STORY HASN'T BEEN TOLD" BRYAN SINGER

It's quite possibly the biggest ensemble yet for a superhero movie.

➤ on, their legacy is an agenda seemingly dominated by the brash synergy of Disney's Marvel Studios and the Christopher Nolan-inspired orchestral superheroics of *Man Of Steel*, and audiences don't care about who came first – just who's best.

"I don't know if there's ever been another movie quite like it," reflects writer and producer Simon Kinberg. "In a way it's like two separate strands of the franchise, but in another way it's two separate franchises, because the tone of *First Class* and the acting talent of *First Class* is different from the look, feel and voice of the original *X-Men* movies."

"It also explores X-Men periods in a different way," adds director Singer. "One new element is that with *First Class* we could make a Silver Age-era Marvel movie, and now we're able to explore the Seventies with this movie and perhaps the Eighties with *Apocalypse* – it's really fun. The one thing we're doing that other people aren't is messing with history – I like to think we're complementing history and making it more exciting... well, *Captain America* did that, but we're doing it our way."

Based on a two-part *Uncanny X-Men* story arc by classic creative team Chris Claremont and John Byrne, 1980's 'Days Of Future Past' underpins much of the *X-Men* mythology. It has inspired animated adventures, ranging

from two 1993 episodes of *X-Men: The Animated Series* to a 2013 instalment of *Ultimate Spider-Man*, been revisited by countless comic-book storylines, and was even homaged in an episode of NBC's *Heroes*. It has cast a shadow over the *X-Men* movie universe for a long time too, with the robot Sentinels being considered as possible villains in almost every movie, while the storyline was being toyed with as the plot for *X-Men 4* before *The Last Stand* forced the franchise into shutdown.

SINGER IS RELIEVED HE WAITED. AFTER GRADUATING FROM XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS AND MOVING TO METROPOLIS TO WORK ON SUPERMAN

Returns, he dodged the deathblow of *The Last Stand* and took a back seat as producer on Matthew Vaughn's sleek and understated Sixties-set prequel, *X-Men: First Class*. As long games go, it's proven to be a doozy – either he's got the luck of Longshot or the prescience of Layla Miller, but that oft-tabled motion to bring Claremont and Byrne's time-travel epic to the big screen is a whole lot easier in 2014 than it would have been in 2006. No need for dodgy de-aging, ala *The Last Stand*'s teen Jean Grey flashback.

"Yeah, absolutely," agrees Singer. "It's a wonderful benefit, because not only have ➤



The dynamic between Charles Xavier and Magneto is one of the constants of the film series.



SAID IN TOOTH & CLAW

Hugh Jackman talks Wolverine, comics and time travel

Wolverine made an icon out of Hugh Jackman, and in return he made the X-Men's fan-favourite antihero the centrepiece of the series. On a high after the success of *The Wolverine*, Jackman is passing on the torch from the original cast to their fresh-faced period predecessors with *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*...

✕ Wolverine has been a big part of your life for so long. Are you constantly aware of his legacy?
For so many years I was grateful and taking it movie by movie. Somehow, with *The Wolverine* and now this, it's starting to dawn on me that it's been 15 years, and I'm starting to do re-units at my house on Saturday night – I'm just kidding. But no, it has dawned on me how lucky and blessed I am, and how much I love this character – he's sort of like a brother for me.

"I LOVE THIS CHARACTER, HE'S SORT OF LIKE A BROTHER FOR ME"
HUGH JACKMAN

✕ The Wolverine and Days Of Future Past go right back to the comics. Are audiences more at ease with the source material?
There's more confidence in the genre from studios, and I think creators like [Christopher] Nolan and Bryan Singer have shown that you can be true to the source material and still make a movie entertaining for those who have never read a comic-book in their life.

Something like *The Wolverine*, which was a smaller story, a more interior story, and the success of a movie like that thrills me because I'm proud of it, but it shows that we can focus on character, emotion, love, comedy – everything about that character, and that is what will keep people coming back.

✕ Does it surprise you that Logan always seems to have more to give as a character?

I keep going back to the comics for that reason, because there is so much inspiration there. I've enjoyed playing Wolverine more than ever, I think [James] Mangold as a director [of *The Wolverine*] pushed me to find different areas and places for him, different vulnerabilities, and it does surprise me that after seven movies I'm enjoying it more than ever. The scripts are getting better in every way – I'm finding it surprising and by no means boring.

✕ Was it strange stepping into the First Class-era cast?

I loved it. First of all, what an incredible group of actors they are. They have an incredibly strong bond as a group, so it was sort of weird for me and Bryan [Singer], the two of us had been shooting for six weeks [in the future setting], by the time they all came on we felt like we were the outsiders, which was interesting. They're a very strong group, and I loved those guys, I love how seriously they approach it and how much fun they have.

✕ Do you think Days Of Future Past is really taking the superhero movie forward?

Yes, because it's ambitious. If you go back to the DNA of the comic-book,

the reason people keep going back is the characters. If they're boring, they're not going to go back. They don't care how well it's drawn, the characters and the storylines they put in – they're one of the cool things you get in comic-books. It is based on one of the comic-books, but there's new characters and surprises, and the idea in movie terms of getting to see [Ian] McKellen and [Michael] Fassbender play the same role – there's so much meat on the bone for fans.

✕ After The Wolverine, Logan seems more at ease with himself. Did you talk much about how he changed between then and Days Of Future Past?

Yeah, he has come to peace with not being at peace, you know what I mean? He is a lot more comfortable with who he is, and he understands the mantle of being the Wolverine, and he is embracing that, but in the interim years – which isn't that long – the situation in the world has become fairly catastrophic fairly quickly that the problems of "What's my life?" and all of that have gone out the window.

✕ Logan has made a lot of mistakes and seen a lot of tragedy. What does the idea of going back in time mean to him?
The larger mission is so great that it has to be a priority, but the temptation to revisit every mistake is great. I tried to either keep those things alive or see possibilities where he could try to right the wrongs. That's something we talked about, because he's particularly defined by the regrets in his life.

Also, one of the fun things about this is that while physically he's able to do the trip, he's in many ways the last person who should be doing it.





BIG MOVIE

X-Men: Days Of Future Past

MIND OVER MATTER

James McAvoy on breaking down Professor X

Charles Xavier isn't in a good place. After James McAvoy showed us a younger, brasher and more self-righteously assured Professor X in *First Class*, the events of the film cut him down as surely as that stray bullet in his spine. With the people closest to him – Magneto and Mystique – gone, James McAvoy reveals how this master telepath could keep dodging his destiny...

⊗ You get to do a lot of screaming in *Days Of Future Past*. Is it fun to have all the big drama?

My character was very different. There's a lot of new stuff to find in the character that we haven't seen before, but he wasn't very conflicted and didn't have any internal tension, but at the end of that movie he gets abandoned, basically. Physically he's debilitated really, and emotionally he is too. Coming into this movie, you have a lot of conflict, a lot of stuff to be figuring out and a lot of anguish to get through. To take the most balanced and together of the X-Men, as we've always seen him, the most self-possessed and the most sorted, to give him his nightmare, was really good.

⊗ Are you bringing in any elements of Patrick Stewart's Charles?

What I thought we might do is put you there for the second movie, then when we got the script I was actually really pleased that we hadn't – they'd

actually moved him further away from that. I think if we get to a third movie... it depends, they might want to stretch it out for another six movies, although that may be a bit much, I feel like by the end of the third movie I've got to start going there because that's sort of the deal we had with the audience when we started *First Class*. Like, "Right, I'm going to show them different, and isn't that interesting and fun?" But you have to respect where the character goes – unless they do something like changing the timeline, and now you've got a whole

"YOU HAVE TO RESPECT WHERE THE CHARACTER GOES – UNLESS THEY CHANGE THE TIMELINE"

JAMES MCAVOY

alternate reality, which sounds like crap get-out-clause movie-making, but it is also true of comic-books as well [laughs], where you've got alternate realities where one character's a good guy and one character's a bad guy.

⊗ How do you find that spin on such an established character?

If you could go back and talk to yourself 40 years ago, I don't know if you'd sit down and [not] think it was an entirely different person. For me, it was important that I remained very, very different. The one key element that they share, which

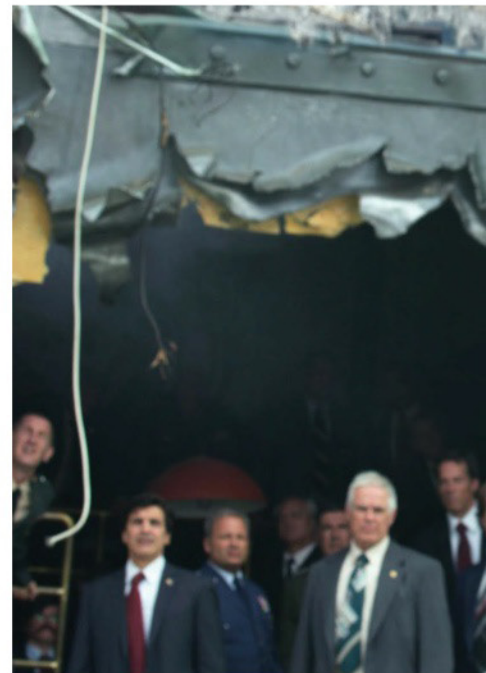
should always be present, is that they both share an incredible capacity for empathy and the imagination that allows you to really understand people. That has always been Charles' real power – his greatest attribute is his ability to put himself in somebody else's shoes and care. What's interesting about my character is that I get to challenge that empathy. He's fighting against that empathy and he wants to shut down, because it just hurts too much to care – to feel and truly understand, because not only can he now see other people and voyeuristically piggy-back on them telepathically, but he can now feel it, and it hurts.

⊗ How does working with Bryan Singer compare to Matthew Vaughn?

It was different and similar in lots of ways – different energy, but sometimes similar choices, arrived at through different meanings at times. They can both be quite bold with their choices and they can both make quite daring moves sometimes, so that was nice. Also, with Bryan he's the guy that's credited with rejuvenating the superhero genre with the first *X-Men*, and with showing that way that's become much more de rigueur – you can take it seriously. You felt you were in safe hands that knew the territory, and it allowed you at times to go a bit further, and I feel I went quite far with the character, because I was in a safe environment.

"IF YOU WANT TO GIVE ME ROBERT DOWNEY JR IN A METAL SUIT AND HAVE HIM JOIN THE X-MEN, THEN LET'S GO HEAD-TO-HEAD"
BRYAN SINGER

Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence) is caught between two moral sides.



How Erik's character arc will fit into the series as a whole remains to be seen.



In the present, Magneto is still causing trouble.



QUICK AS YOU LIKE

American Horror Story's Evan Peters on Quicksilver

Your costume has received a drubbing online. Will people change their minds?

The pictures are taken out of context. You do forget that it's 1972, he's a teenager and he's kind of a punk before he becomes the grown Quicksilver. This is when he's a kid living in his parents' basement. So I think the costume fits well with what happens in the story, and people are going to be excited.

Is his relationship with Magneto and the X-Men as complex as in the comics?

You don't know if he's going to be good or bad – he's on that teetering point. He has a tendency to be excited by mischief and anarchy, so there's that side, but at this point he's not evil – he just likes breaking the law a bit.

We see your sister in the film. Is there a hint that she could be the Scarlet Witch?

I think we'll find out in future films. You get the feeling that all these characters are coming from the comic-book world and are tied together in the same way.

It must be strange not being the only Quicksilver, with Aaron Taylor-Johnson playing him in *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*.

I'm excited to see Aaron's performance. It's such a cool character and such a cool superpower, so I'm excited to see both of them. I don't see any competition, because it's two different worlds. This takes place in the Seventies and he's a kid, so it's completely different. I'm definitely excited to be able to play the character, you know?



Daniel Cudmore returns as Colossus, alongside new face Blink (Bingbing Fan).

➤ some of these actors gone on to become huge stars in their own right, but also they're not familiar characters, so to go back and find a Magneto very different from where we left him in *First Class* and to be able to see characters from the future interact with those characters from the past is very exciting.

"If you don't know the characters, I ran a rough cut of the movie for a lot of people who'd never seen an *X-Men* film. I've tried to dig them up," the director laughs, "and it's a nice overview, they're not really lost; they understand what's going on. They may not know the specifics about certain characters, but they get the thrust of the story and they understand the stakes, because at its heart it's as much a time-travel movie as it is an *X-Men* movie."

INTO ALL THE SPACES WHERE SINGER WASN'T STEPPED KINBERG. WRITER ON THE LAST STAND, PRODUCER ON FIRST CLASS AND WRITER/PRODUCER ON BOTH DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

and its much-hyped 2016 follow-up *X-Men: Apocalypse*, he's now every bit Singer's – and long-term producer and superhero supremo Lauren Shuler Donner's – equal as a custodian of the *X-Men* universe. It's even rumoured that his role as producer/writer of Josh Trank's *The Fantastic Four* is so that 20th Century Fox can bring the first family into a Marvel Phase Two-style shared universe of their own.

"We didn't have any idea when we were making *First Class* that we would be making *Days Of Future Past* and uniting the casts," Kinberg admits. "In our conversations we thought it would be interesting to bring Ian [McKellen] and Patrick [Stewart] back just as bookends to the movie, to start the movie like *Saving Private Ryan* or *Schindler's List* and call up logs with the older versions of the characters. That was our initial impulse;

it was just gonna bring them back for these omni-scenes, they weren't going to be integrated with the storytelling of the movie at all. Then, as we started talking about that, *Days Of Future Past* was always one of my favourite comics – that and 'Dark Phoenix' [another iconic Claremont and Byrne arc from 1976/7] were my two favourites. We screwed up 'Dark Phoenix' with *The Last Stand*, so this was an opportunity either to make amends for that or screw up another great run!

"I brought the idea of *Days Of Future Past* to Matthew [Vaughn, then set to return as director] and Bryan, who was the producer, and to the studio and everyone was daunted about what the physical reality of that would be. Even in calling up actors back together, not just in terms of their contracts but also in terms of their schedules, but everyone loved it conceptually and creatively. Then there's all kinds of challenges in telling a time-travel story with ten or 12 main characters, but the voice of this particular movie came to me very easily. Strangely – as you'll see – it's in some ways a combination of the grittiness and groundedness of Matthew's movie, of *First Class*, with the slightly bigger, glossier *X-Men* that Bryan created."

Although the comic-books have always exerted a pull on their movie spin-offs, it's over the last few years especially that links with the source material have been worn boldly on spandex sleeves. While the first three *X-Men* films kept their dot-shaded origins concealed beneath form-fitting leather, last year's *The Wolverine* – based on Chris Claremont and Frank Miller's ninja-filled 1982 miniseries – and this year's *Days Of Future Past* have it front and centre. Inevitably, this throws up its own obstacles.

"I say this – joking – with blood on my hands: with *X3* we wanted to tell the *Dark* ➤





BIG MOVIE

X-Men: Days Of Future Past

➤ *Phoenix* story, and the movie got sidetracked so that the base story, which was the Phoenix story, became the B-story of that movie, and the mutant cure, which was inspired by one that Joss Whedon created called 'Gifted' [in *Astonishing X-Men*, with artist John Cassaday], became the core of the movie. Then *First Class*, to some extent was from a less famous comic arc [2008's *X-Men: First Class*, by Jeff Parker and Roger Cruz], and then when I presented people with *Days Of Future Past* it was, 'How do we stay as true as possible to the book?' Because it has its own separate challenges and demands, namely who's going to be sent back in time, because Kitty's consciousness being sent back 50 years would be a problem, because she wouldn't have been born yet."

IT WAS A SIMPLE QUESTION WITH A GREAT ANSWER: WOLVERINE. FAN-FAVOURITE HUGH JACKMAN HAD STEERED THE SURLY SCRAPPER THROUGH SOME OF THE LOWEST

ebbs in *X-Men* history – *The Last Stand* and *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* – without a dip in enthusiasm for the character. Arguably Marvel's last breakout household name since the Sixties (although another furry killer, Rocket Raccoon, may end up stealing that

crown by the year's end in *Guardians Of The Galaxy*), Wolverine was the ideal candidate to step into the past, following up on his foul-mouthed cameo in *First Class* by projecting himself back in time and into his old body – one of the perks of being an endlessly regenerating near-immortal.

"He's the guy coming here with the knowledge," explains Singer, "but he doesn't have the patience. Initially, the whole idea was for Charles Xavier to go back in time, but he couldn't do it – he physically couldn't make the trip – so the dynamic of these characters [is reversed]. Wolverine, who is usually the character that needs the most corraling, suddenly now he's put in the position of babysitter for these young characters who've reached the lowest of the low in their lives, and he's got to rally them together to do this mission. Of course, it all goes wrong, and then you wonder, is he gonna succeed or not?"

"It reminded me a lot of making *The Usual Suspects*, because in the first part of the movie I shot the future sequences with Hugh Jackman and the cast from the original films – a lot like when I was shooting *The Usual Suspects* with Kevin Spacey, Chazz Palminteri, Dan Hedaya, Giancarlo Esposito



Peter Dinklage takes on villain duties as Bolivar Trask.



The rise of Lawrence's star has brought her a more prominent role in the series.



COUNTDOWN TO APOCALYPSE

Bryan Singer, Hugh Jackman and Simon Kinberg on *X-Men: Apocalypse*

Granted near limitless power and lifespan due to his mutant ability to manipulate molecules, En Sabah Nur was born in Ancient Egypt and has controlled the evolution of mutants throughout history, particularly the X-Men. Whatever his role in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, it's going to cut deep...

3 IT'LL CARRY ON FROM DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

It's clear that however *Days Of Future Past* winds up, the timeline will be irrevocably altered for good, and the future we thought ourselves familiar with from the first three movies could easily unfold differently.

"In a way, it feels like from this point forward we can do whatever we want," reveals Simon Kinberg, "but we'll be moving forward with some of the actors from the *First Class*/*Days Of Future Past* cast, so there's stuff we've done in these last couple of movies that we'll definitely continue doing for them, at least in *Apocalypse*, if not more movies going forward."

2 IT COULD UNDO X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

With Vietnam at the backdrop of *Days Of Future Past*, Logan should be somewhere else – getting inducted into Team X and making the life choices that get him his adamantium bones and cost him his memories.

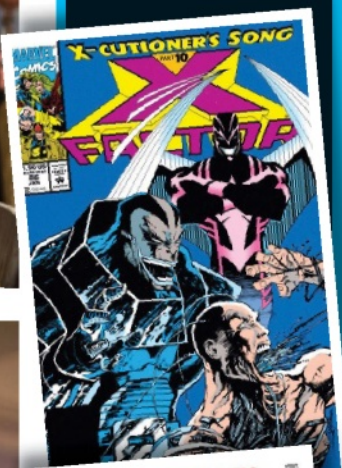
"This has all been thought through, trust me," says Hugh Jackman. "I'm trying to answer this without giving too much away – there's a really exciting set of possibilities about what is proposed by having him go back, but it is thought out in terms of how this plays into *X-Men*, so in a way you can see many different possibilities, and in a way it will completely make sense."

1 CYCLOPS, JEAN GREY AND STORM ARE BACK

Apocalypse will wind the clock so far forward that it takes on a neon glow: the Eighties.

"My next goal is how did the X-Men come together? That story hasn't been told yet, so [*Days Of Future Past*] is the inbetweenquel," laughs Singer. "It's in between the birth of that relationship with Charles and Erik and the formation of the X-Men."

Of course, this means *Apocalypse* is in the right time zone to revisit and recast iconic original characters Cyclops, Jean Grey and Storm. "Yeah," Singer confirms when that question is put to him, "exactly."





"WE SCREWED UP DARK PHOENIX WITH X3, SO THIS WAS AN OPPORTUNITY EITHER TO MAKE AMENDS FOR THAT OR SCREW UP ANOTHER GREAT COMIC" SIMON KINDERG



Nicholas Hoult dons the blue fur again as Beast.



Sunspot (Adan Canto) joins the returning Kitty Pryde (Ellen Page), Iceman (Shawn Ashmore) and Colossus.

and all those people. Then suddenly they all left and we started a new movie with James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence and Nicholas Hoult, which we shot for months and months, and I still carried over Hugh Jackman as I had carried over Kevin Spacey when we joined the Suspects in that movie."

IN EMBARKING ON NOT ONLY THE MOST AMBITIOUS X-MEN FILM TO DATE, BUT PERHAPS EVEN ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS SUPERHEROES FILMS TO DATE (AT LEAST UNTIL

Warner Bros gets *Justice League* going) *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* has ridden a rollercoaster of reactions with the perceived complexity of the storyline, and the tidal wave of new mutants forced an acid-reflux of doubt and derision. It's well-founded to a point, as joining the *First Class* cast in the Vietnam War backdrop of 1972 are a younger incarnation of Toad (Evan Jonigkeit) and super-speedy Quicksilver (Evan Peters), while the already bloated future team gets blazing-hot Sunspot (Adan Canto), portal-chucking Blink (Fan Bingbing), hunter/tracker Warpath (Booboo Stewart) and the energy-slinging badass Bishop (Omar Sy).

The *X-Men* franchise has evolved, and whether it'll reflect the dreams of Professor X or the fears of Magneto – co-existence in the movie landscape, or brutal extermination – remains to be seen, but there's no getting away from Marvel Studios. Kevin Feige's predecessors fired off the film rights to the likes of the *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* long before Disney bought the company and gave it the means to realise its blockbuster potential in-house. Criticisms of *Days Of Future Past's* scale and cast – and predictions of failure – aren't happening in a vacuum; they're as much informed by the partisan nature of fandom as they are by memories of Juggernaut running after Juno in *The Last Stand*. Feige has made no secret of wanting the *X-Men* back at Marvel Studios, and he's got a choir of voices clamouring for that across social networks.


"It's not healthy for us," asserts Singer. "I'll tell you why: they're both comic-books, and at some point you can expand the universes, that's where the comparison ends. It sounds defensive, and it is defensive, but only because people make comparisons between this and *The Avengers*, which is ludicrous.

"*The Avengers* is a mash-up of massive single character franchises of incredibly familiar characters and Iron Man. And did I mention Iron Man? Oh, and *by the way* – Iron Man.

"They are huge, colossal franchises that are peppered with all these other characters that are again, extremely famous, and so yes, Fox will at some point synergise these characters, and that process is slowly beginning, but it's very different to taking movies that gross close to \$1 billion and then pushing them together into these giant, broad movies. If you want to give me Robert Downey Jr in a metal suit and have him join the *X-Men*, then yes, let's go head-to-head.

"That being said, this is quite a big movie, and we do have a lot of major factors, and I think we'll do quite well," he adds, "but it's a very different thing. *Avengers* and the Marvel movies are individual franchises based on major characters, that's why there are some Marvel characters in *Avengers* that don't have their own movie, because I don't know if they had their own movie anyone would be that interested.

"We're the bastard stepchild of the comic-book universe, you can go to my mom and she knows who Captain America is, but you try and explain to her who Deadpool is? She doesn't even know the Hulk – 'You know, the Hulk! Green! Big guy!' – so... Gambit? It'll have to be a different process. It's doable, but it's not any way comparable."

The next stage in superhuman evolution may have arrived, but the fight for survival is by no means over. 

X-Men: Days Of Future Past will be released in cinemas on 22 May.

APOCALYPSE NOW

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT X-MEN TIMELINES, ALTERNATE UNIVERSES, DOOMED FUTURES AND THE PEOPLE WHO MOVE BETWEEN THEM...

WORDS JAMES HOARE

EARTH-616

The regular Marvel Comics timeline, the X-Men's story ostensibly begins in the Sixties with *X-Men* issue #1, but the 'sliding' time scale means that the dates are ultimately flexible.

1960

1965

1970

1975

1980

1985

1990

ALL-NEW X-MEN

In order to teach present-day Cyclops a lesson, Beast brings the wide-eyed original teen X-Men forward from the past. Convinced that this will do incredible damage to the time stream, two opposing teams of future X-Men journey back in time to convince them to go home – with their fists.

DAYS OF FUTURE PAST (EARTH-811)

The assassination of a prominent anti-mutant campaigner in 1980 results in a wave of anti-mutant hysteria. By 2013, mutants live in camps and the X-Men have been hunted down by robot Sentinels.

RACHEL GREY

When the future daughter of Jean Grey and Cyclops sends her astral form back after Kate to find out how it went, she gains part of the Phoenix Force and joins the X-Men, before being sent 2,000 years into an apocalyptic future, where she founds the Askani and abducts Cable. She then returns and rejoins the X-Men – that's the simplified version.

LEGION

Xavier's mentally unstable son decides to do his dad a favour by killing Magneto, but after going back in time he accidentally kills the Professor instead, and the Age Of Apocalypse timeline is created. Legion dies – for a bit.

CABLE

The son of Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor, Nathan Summers is taken to the future by his (sort of) sister Rachel, where he becomes cyborg freedom fighter Cable. He shuttles back and forth between the past far too many times to count.

AGE OF APOCALYPSE (EARTH-295)

The assassination of Charles Xavier in 1979 results in a wave of mutant supremacy that ends with Apocalypse ruling North America. Humans are being hunted to extinction and the X-Men are divided between the resistance and the genocidal regime.

X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Apocalypse Now

KATE PRYDE

As the last of the X-Men fall, Kate Pryde makes a last-ditch attempt to undo the terrible future – sending her consciousness back in time to 1980 to prevent the assassination of Senator Robert Kelly by the Brotherhood of Mutants.



BISHOP

Mutant cop Bishop pursues the murderous Trevor Fitzroy back in time and joins the X-Men. After being sent even further back to stop Legion from killing Magneto, he fails, and when the Age Of Apocalypse dawns, Bishop retains his original memories and fights to put things right.



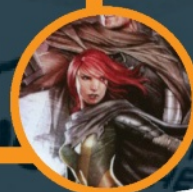
XSE (EARTH-1191)

Similar to the *Days Of Future Past* storyline, except 60 years on and the Sentinels and death squads have been overthrown. Human and mutant distrust is high and peace is fragile, but Xavier's Security Enforcers keep the X-Men's dream of co-existence alive.



ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

Anything could happen and probably will. See *Old Man Logan*, *X-Men: The End*, *X-Men 2099*, *Here Comes Tomorrow* and many more.



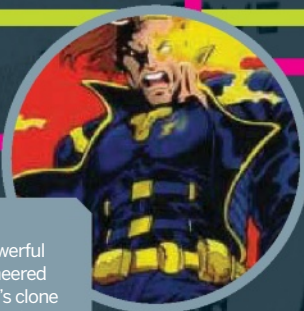
HOPE SUMMERS

The first mutant born after M Day and prophecy magnet, in Cable's timeline Hope saves both humans and mutants, while in Bishop's timeline she's the catalyst for genocide. Luckily, Cable finds her first and takes her on the run, before she returns to the X-Men a teenage badass.



NATE GREY

The absurdly powerful genetically engineered son of Jean Grey's clone and Cyclops, Nate Grey escapes the Age Of Apocalypse and has a bunch of adventures. He's the tip of the iceberg, as Dark Beast, Nightcrawler, Iceman, Wild Child and Sugar Man all jump ship, but most are eventually sent home.



BLINK

Blink finds herself a member of dimension-hopping super-team Exiles, and they have many crazy adventures, none of which we have space to write about. She's eventually joined by other Age Of Apocalypse escapees Sabretooth and Holocaust.



ASKANI (EARTH-4935)

With Xavier as a rally point against extremists, Apocalypse's war of genetic purity against humanity begins in the far future. Only Clan Askani keep the X-Men's ideals alive.



1995

2000

2005

2010

2014

HOW
**BRYAN
SINGER'S X-MEN**
CHANGED THE
SUPERHERO
MOVIE

SPLITTING

SAM RAIMI'S SPIDER-MAN MAY HAVE SPAWNED THE IMITATORS, BUT IT WAS BRYAN SINGER'S X-MEN THAT PROVED SUPERHERO MOVIES COULD RESONATE WITH THE MODERN AUDIENCE. WE SPEAK TO SINGER, HIS STARS AND HIS PRODUCERS TO DISCOVER HOW MARVEL'S STRANGEST TEENS SPAWNED A NEW WAVE OF SUPER-POWERED MOVE MAKING...

WORDS EDWARD GROSS



© Gage Skidmore

There is a clear delineation in the history of comic-book movies, a sub-genre that essentially got its start with 1920's *The Mark Of Zorro* and genuinely came into its own in 2000 with Bryan Singer's *X-Men*. Along the way there were significant advances – most notably in the form of 1978's *Superman: The Movie* and 1989's *Batman*, with a helpful assist from 1998's *Blade* – but it was those first two *X-Men* films that drew a line in the cinematic sand.

Part of the importance of those films can be found in the casting of such critically acclaimed actors as

THE ATOM

Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart and Brian Cox, a trio who would seemingly be more at home bringing the characters of William Shakespeare to life than those of Stan Lee. Yet there they were, joined by Anna Paquin, Academy Award-winner Halle Berry and franchise perennial favourite Hugh Jackman, among others.

"I think we provided dimension," says Cox, who played William Stryker in *X2*, "and I think these kinds of movies require dimension. Bryan Singer is very passionate about these films. He doesn't treat them lightly, and he sees each of them as very much a part of the whole."

He pauses, searching within his own mind for understanding of why Singer cares so deeply about

these films. "Bryan is Jewish," he says finally, "and there's a certain understanding of feeling marginal, which is really what the mutant thing is all about for him. There's a lot of allegory in what he's doing. I think when Stan Lee wrote it, because there are so many elements to these mutants, it was very complicated. It isn't just Spider-Man against the world or Superman against the world; it's a series of people who have personality enhancements which have to do with effective elements of their personalities, as it were.

"I think Bryan has a very strong sense of the allegorical nature of it. That's why he treats them with the same kind of mystery that he treats something like *The Usual Suspects*. They're like puzzles in a

way; they're quite complex. The narrative is very straightforward, but you realise there are a lot of layers to it. It makes it easier from an actor's point of view, because you know that you're working in real territory and it's not just a question of hitting your marks."

Right from the beginning, Singer, who was coming off of *The Usual Suspects* and *Apt Pupil* (which marked the first time he worked with McKellen), made it clear that he was consistently striving to do more than just hit his marks. In fact, it's the reason that producer Lauren Shuler Donner wanted him to take the reins on the original mutant adventure.

"It may not have seemed it, but he was a perfect fit," she offers. "The reason I wanted him was that it was ➤

“BECAUSE OF TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES AND ALL THE MOVIES THAT PRECEDED US, IF WE WERE GOING TO SUCCEED WITH X-MEN, WE WERE GOING TO HAVE TO SUCCEED ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL

LAUREN SHULER DONNER





THREE'S A CROWD

Zak Penn, Simon Kinberg and Brett Ratner recall *X-Men: The Last Stand*

Back in 2006, there was genuine concern over Bryan Singer departing the *X-Men* universe to direct *Superman Returns*, to be replaced by Brett Ratner for third entry *X-Men: The Last Stand*. Zak Penn, who wrote the story for *X2* and co-wrote film three with Simon Kinberg, shared that concern, "in the beginning."

"Bryan Singer is an excellent director," he notes. "But one of the things about Bryan is that he's not a guy whose visual style dominates the stories he's telling. Steven Spielberg, James Cameron, Peter Jackson – they're in the vein of Bryan in that they are all kind of classical filmmakers who focus on story and adapt their style to fit it. What I'm trying to say is that the *X-Men* scripts have a tone as well. If you write to that tone, a director can come in and ruin it or be respectful of it, but it is possible to be maintained."

"X3 TOOK A LOT OF CRAP FROM PEOPLE, BUT IT'S A DARING MOVIE IN A LOT OF WAYS"

For his part, Ratner says he was such a fan of what had been established that he knew the key was to stick with their tone and formula, made easier by the fact that he was dealing with a returning cast. "My input," he says, "was trying to make a more emotional film. I wanted to tell a story and act as if this is the concluding chapter in a trilogy. Not reinvent it; not make it a Brett Ratner film, but stay with the formula that has worked and add more heart. I'm a very emotional guy, I like feeling something in the movie. The audience cares about these characters so much, and it was very important to me to stay true to who they were and not try and reinvent it."

Penn admits that he grew weary over the critical bashing the film ultimately received. "*X3* took a lot of crap from people, but I feel it's a daring movie in a lot of ways," he opines. "I think I was more worried about *X2*, because with that film we just didn't know. You never know when you write something and hand it in. My script was rewritten a lot on *X2*, so I wasn't sure how it was going to turn out. But having seen how *X3* turned out before its release, I kind of knew. I would have been more upset if I saw it and thought it sucked."



→ obvious from *The Usual Suspects* that he could handle multiple characters, and he had a great style, which this needed. But before I even met him, just looking at his movies, the man had intelligence. I felt, because of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and all the movies that preceded us, that if we were going to succeed, we were going to have to succeed on a different level. One of those levels was intelligence, and he provided that. If it was pure cartoon, we would have died."

Executive producer Avi Arad (represented on screen this summer with *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*) couldn't agree more, noting that the choice of a director like Singer was a very conscious one. "We make art movies wrapped around these giant characters," he explains. "In order to do this, we remember that the most important things in the Marvel universe are human relationships. Even the soul of a villain is a tortured soul. Someone like Bryan, I think understands the complexity of this world, about hidden identities. The mutant is his metaphor for just being different. *The Usual Suspects* was an ensemble piece. It's tough enough to make a movie with two heroes, one villain and a B-story. Here was *X-Men*, where you have 14 people to deal with, and it takes a special mind to play this chess game."

"You could look at *X-Men*, *Spider-Man* or *Daredevil* and say, 'Yeah, if you don't know comics, it's a comic-book movie, which means men in tights jumping over buildings,'" Arad continues. "We wanted to raise the bar. Bryan Singer had the sensitivity, visual style and courage to start the first movie in a concentration camp to explain the villain. Immediately, you know that this villain is multi-faceted. He's not just a guy who decided, 'OK, I'm going to kill humans.' No, he represents something else. You need a filmmaker who can get that philosophy across."

They may have been confident, but today Singer admits that he didn't share their optimism regarding the film's prospects. In fact, he admitted that he was actually "dreading" the release of the first *X-Men* film.

"You have a vision for the *X-Men* universe, but you also respect the fact that it has a huge fan base and there's a lot of scepticism," he reflects. "You also look at your own films and see the shortcomings, and all of a sudden you combine the shortcomings with the scepticism, and it makes one very nervous. But I'm pleased it was successful. My goal, if the first one was successful, was to take the opportunity to make a much more rich motion picture with the sequel."



Part of *X-Men's* success was down to its ability to attract actors of the calibre of Patrick Stewart.

WORDS EDWARD GROSS

"BRYAN SINGER HAD THE SENSITIVITY, VISUAL STYLE AND COURAGE TO START THE FIRST MOVIE IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP TO EXPLAIN THE VILLAIN"

AVI ARAD

WHICH IS WHAT HE DID WITH X2 AND ITS SETTING SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE ORIGINAL. IN THE AFTERMATH OF MAGNETO'S EFFORTS TO ALTER THE

genetic nature of humans, a form of war had been declared on mutants. Director of Homeland Security General Stryker (who has ties with Wolverine's past) leads an armed assault on Professor Charles Xavier's mutant academy. Magneto, who has escaped his prison of plastic, reaches out to Xavier in the hope that by pooling their powers they'll be able to turn back the tide of human aggression. Magneto, naturally, has his own agenda, which will lead to further conflict with the X-Men.

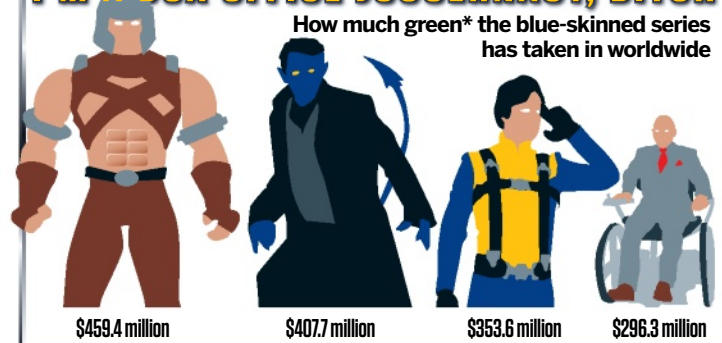
"I wanted X2 to be more rich in character, rich in action, scope, depth, humour and romance," says Singer. "Just to have more things going on; more of the kind of things that I like to see in movies, without having scenes like, 'Rogue is a conductor of human energy. When she touches someone, blah, blah, blah...'. The first movie is the most challenging, because you're defining the characters, you're establishing the universe. It's ultimately what makes the first *Star Wars* movie such a great achievement, but *The*

Empire Strikes Back was a richer movie – a little bit darker, but also a bit more elegant. George Lucas could have gone and told the same story again. In this case, there were certain themes that were the same, but ultimately it was about Luke Skywalker facing his destiny, and our story's about – among other things – Wolverine facing his past. One can only do that when one is fully introduced to the universe and enough people are invested in the characters. I think in the case of our *X-Men* universe, for those who are initiated, there's an investment there. For those who aren't, they'll still know what's going on."

When Singer began developing X2, he had two writers tackle separate potential scripts. One was written by Zak Penn (who would go on to write *X-Men: The Last Stand*) and the other by David Hayter, who had written the first film and would eventually adapt *Watchmen*. In the end, though, the director brought on relative newbies Michael Dougherty and Daniel Harris (who would write *Superman Returns* for Singer in 2006). They joined the crew in February 2002, and found themselves in the unique position of remaining on set through every stage of

I'M A BOX OFFICE JUGGERNAUT, BITCH

How much green* the blue-skinned series has taken in worldwide



*Unadjusted, courtesy of BoxOfficeMojo.com



The expansive X-Men mythos allowed for a colourful cast of characters.

The death of Cyclops was one of the most controversial aspects of X3.



➤ production – which is highly unusual on films.

“I think part of that is because sometimes the directors and producers don’t want the writers around, and sometimes the writers don’t want to be around,” says Dougherty. “We were really there. In a lot of ways it’s not like it was required by contract. We wanted to be there to make sure the story stayed intact; that the screenplay didn’t wander off in 20 different directions, which tends to happen when you’re making one of these films. For us, we just wanted to make sure that the baby would grow up well. For Bryan, he likes having people he trusts creatively around him, just to whisper in his ear now and then, and because he likes to make changes while he’s shooting. To me it’s like time travel; you make one tiny change now, it’s going to affect everything you shot before or are about to shoot. It’s a massive ripple effect. He wanted his writers there to manage that ripple effect and make sure we weren’t going to shoot ourselves in the foot down the road.”

“The flip side,” Harris adds with a laugh, “is that it was a lot of hard work, but we were there from call to wrap every day for 115 days of shooting. They allowed us to be involved with every scene and see everything play out and every word come to life. The flip side of that is when scenes don’t work or something isn’t funny, they pause the scene, turn to us and say, ‘Find us something better right now.’”

WHICH IS ACTUALLY SOMETHING THEY WERE CHARGED WITH DOING RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FILM. THEIR

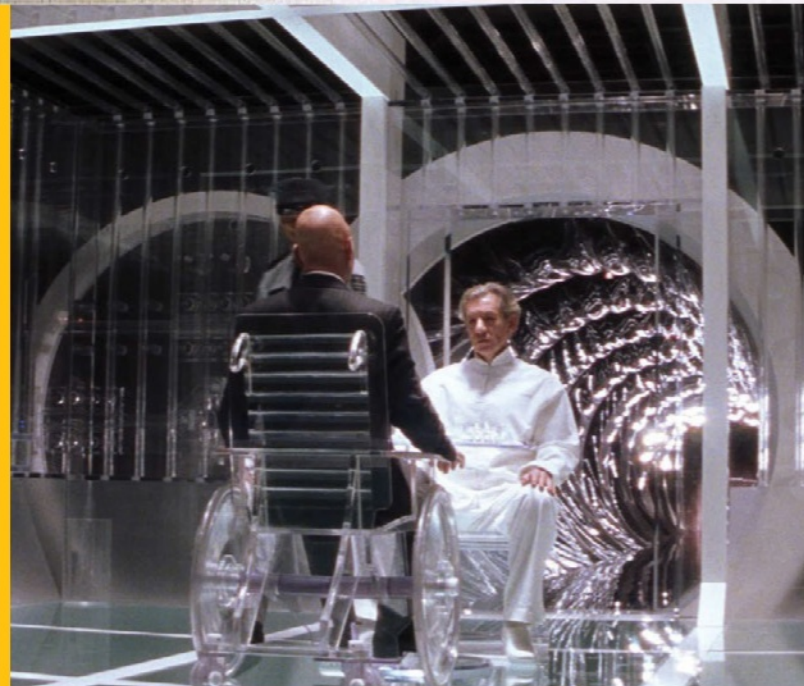
directive was that Singer wanted to expand on certain elements from the first film, particularly the growing tensions between mutants and humans and the fact that

there were two mutant groups reacting to that tension. On one side was Magneto, and on the other was Xavier, along with their respective followers.

“Bryan really wanted to up the stakes and create a story where humans in essence were going to be making the next move,” says Dougherty. “Whereas the first film was two mutant groups fighting among themselves and humans were what was at stake, this is kind of the human strike back, in a sense. He really wanted to create a story that would give a face to the humans. We had Senator Kelly in the first film, who is the ultimate politician that smiles, waves and shakes hands. He wasn’t really a man of action. Bryan wanted to create a human villain, in essence, that kind of represented the extreme position that some people might take. So we created the character of William Stryker. His name comes from the ‘God Loves, Man Kills’ book, but that’s pretty much all he has in common with that character. In the comic, he was a religious figure; a Bible-thumping type character who hatches his own plot against mutants. Bryan wanted to create a character that came from the shadowy government realm. In X2, he has a much more military background.”

The idea, Harris points out, is that the heroes of the film exist in the real world that has been created for them. While it may not necessarily be the world that the audience lives in, it’s taken very seriously within the bounds of the movie.

“It was important to us to treat the escalating war and humanity turning against mutant kind in a very real way and to give it a very human face,” he says. “The flip side of that is to make this an action/adventure comic-book hero movie that could work within the human framework appropriately. To put this in real terms, there was no kind of mutant villain in the movie.



1 X-MEN (2000)

Professor X, Cyclops, Jean Grey, Storm and Wolverine. **Not including:** Rogue, as she didn’t actually get the opportunity to go into battle with the team – she got kidnapped by Magneto and used as bait instead.

2 X2: X-MEN UNITED (2003)

Professor X, Cyclops, Jean Grey, Storm, Wolverine, Rogue, Nightcrawler, Iceman and Pyro. **Not including:** Colossus, because Logan put him on the subs bench.

3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND (2006)

Professor X, Beast, Storm, Rogue, Wolverine, Iceman, Colossus, Angel and Kitty Pryde. **Not including:** Cyclops, he was hardly in it. Jean and Pyro; they were on the wrong side.

4 X-MEN: FIRST CLASS (2011)

Professor X, Magneto, Havok, Beast, Banshee and Mystique. **Not including:** Darwin, as he didn’t even get a chance, and Angel Salvatore, because she ducked out as soon as she could.

5 X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST (2014)

Professor X, Magneto, Wolverine, Iceman, Kitty Pryde, Storm, Colossus, Sunspot, Bishop, Warpath, Blink and Rogue. **Not including:** The characters in the Seventies.



The films exhibited an outsider quality that was easy to identify with.

WORDS EDWARD GROSS



With quality staying variable, not all the characters got the portrayal they deserved.



Part movie part allegory, *X-Men* had something for everyone.

It was a question for us of mutants fighting humans, and it's a very difficult thing to work with because you have people with every conceivable power. Covering all of our characters, they can do anything one way or the other, and working together they can do everything. Magneto's role in earlier drafts was a friend of the cause. There was no arch-enemy who was a mutant with any kind of powers, which did not enable us to have any kind of good, big action at the end that made sense within our story. So what we did was try to re-conceive the anti-heroes and villains of the movie to match our people better and make more organic sense – a worthy battle, but also on a story level that was more interesting, so you were dealing with psychology between the creation of mutants and mutants fighting for humans, and what you get out of mutants fighting on the wrong side of the fence.

"Who's on what side," he elaborates, "having to choose those sides, and Magneto's role in the whole movie was greatly changed by us. Let's just say that before we were around, Magneto was sort of a friend to the cause, and that just seemed to go against his nature. But now not everything is as it seems, and it's important

"BRYAN SINGER IS JEWISH AND THERE'S A CERTAIN UNDERSTANDING OF FEELING MARGINAL WHICH IS REALLY WHAT THE MUTANT THING IS ALL ABOUT FOR HIM"
BRIAN COX



for this movie that you go along with these guys and believe what you have to believe at the moment. Sometimes, characters need to be more complex than they appear. It was our job to take full advantage of these amazing characters. You can't just disobey them and go against their inherent needs."

One of the most appealing aspects of *X2* for Dougherty was the fact that the story served as an allegory of real-life issues, which is something he feels the audience doesn't usually find in the sub-genre. "I think we've all felt at some point in our lives that we were outsiders or freaks," he says. "We all felt like outsiders, and this is the film that capitalises on all that. One of the things I said about the X-Men in general is, 'What are they whining about? They all look like supermodels.' But then you have a character like Nightcrawler, and even among the outsiders he's an outsider. Everyone else is gorgeous and can walk down the street and not get noticed. This guy has blue skin, a tail and yellow eyes. What makes it fun is that they accept him. He's different, but to these characters he's not."

Given its 2003 release date, much of the power of *X2* comes from the fact that there are numerous elements of the story that can

be looked upon as a mutant reflection of our own world, with Stryker's call for war not seeming very far removed from America's response to 9/11 in Afghanistan and Iraq; and of course, the persecution of those who are different.

"It is a reflection, though it was never quite the intention," offers Singer. "The script was developed and the story pretty much laid out prior to 9/11, for instance, but at the same time there's timeless conflicts that are occurring as a society within our population that exists – some members good, some members sinister. A great paranoia has developed in relation to this society, and what's going to happen to the world is the result. A change is coming. It's that kind of thing. I had that story before the tragedy, and one doesn't alter anything due to that. I think a lot of events in history are nothing new. In this case, it just happened to be significant."



The *X-Men And The Wolverine Adamantium Collection*, containing all four *X-Men* movies and both *Wolverine* movies, is available now on DVD and Blu-ray.

TOMORROW NEVER DIES

2014'S BIGGEST, DUMBEST SCI-FI SPECTACLE, OR A GENRE-SUBVERTING SURPRISE THAT HAS CREPT RIGHT UNDER THE WIRE? **EDGE OF TOMORROW** PLUGS ACTION FAVOURITE **TOM CRUISE** INTO AN ARMoured EXOSKELETON AND AN ALIEN-BATTLING FUTURE WAR, BUT **ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR DOUG LIMAN**, ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS...

WORDS CAT COLLINS

THIS SUMMER'S REQUISITE BIG-BUDGET TOM CRUISE MOVIE SEES THE STAR IN YET ANOTHER BATTLE FOR THE PLANET WHEN A CRUEL AND UGLY ALIEN RACE DECIDES TO INVADe EARTH AND DESTROY HUMANITY. SOUNDS LIKE A STANDARD SCI-FI BLOCKBUSTER,

right? Well, it's not – at least according to *Edge Of Tomorrow* director Doug Liman, who is unashamedly outspoken in his lament of what he calls “cookie cutter” studio movies.

But in an age where it's generally accepted that no idea is wholly original, is Liman really going to give us something different? Best known for his work on critically acclaimed actioners *The Bourne Identity* and *Mr & Mrs Smith*, as well as his breakout hit *Swingers*, Liman's previous foray into science fiction comes in the decidedly dodgy form of 2008's *Jumper* – a film with a promising premise that failed to deliver on many levels.

Edge Of Tomorrow is another adaptation, this time loosely based on Japanese author Hiroshi Sakurazaka's light novel *All You Need Is Kill*. While the original story doesn't seem to have had much bearing on the resulting film, it clearly inspired Liman to attempt something a little bit different with his latest studio project.

“It's so rare these days to find a film that fulfils a big studio appetite and at the same time is wholly original,” he says. “You tend to see a lot of either big movies that just feel like you've seen it before – usually because you have – or you see eclectic and original movies, but they're much smaller. ➤”



"IT'S A HUGE IRONY
THAT I'VE GOT TOM
CRUISE, ALIENS AND
TIME TRAVEL, AND
I'M THE FILM THAT'S
THE COUNTER-
PROGRAMMING OF THE
SUMMER"

DOLG LIMAN



BIG MOVIE

Edge Of Tomorrow

“I look at the trailers for a bunch of movies coming out this summer, and it looks like cookie-cutter stuff. Who’s going to want to watch them in 50 years? It doesn’t seem like people are making bold and courageous choices in the movies that are being made, and when I think of Hollywood that’s what I think of. It doesn’t mean that you can’t make a great independent film within the Hollywood system – look at *Gravity* – it does happen, but I wish it happened more often.”

It’s a strong stance to take, particularly when that Hollywood formula is tried, tested and translates to box-office success, for better or worse. But in this project, Liman saw an opportunity to break the mould and step into unknown territory.

“OCCASIONALLY, A PROJECT COMES ALONG THAT CAN HAVE THE SCOPE THAT *EDGE OF TOMORROW* HAS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IS 100 PER CENT ORIGINAL,” HE EXPLAINS.

“There was no pressure from Warner Bros to make this look like a standard studio film – they wanted to do something fresh. It’s a huge irony that I’ve got Tom Cruise, aliens and time travel, and I’m the film that’s the counter-programming of the summer. It’s not like other films.

“Directing a movie is an insecurity-making experience, because everyone expects you to know how to do it. The system wants directors to show up on the set and give confident answers – they don’t want to hear a director say, ‘I don’t know’. But early on in the process of *Edge Of Tomorrow* I was like, ‘I’ve never made a movie like this before, I really don’t know what I’m doing.’ Sometimes, saying your insecurities out loud allows you to take ownership of it. They can’t out you as an impostor if you ‘fess up right at the beginning! And the people around me push me to try to shake it up and do something you haven’t seen before.”

On the face of it, though, we have seen it all before. Alien invasion? Check. Time travel? Check. Tom Cruise bravely stepping into the breach to save the world? Check, check and check again – almost to the point of tedium.

This director’s approach to this seemingly standard fantasy fare, though, is something of a departure from tradition in several ways. For starters, the sci-fi of it all really wasn’t the point for Liman.

“I do love science fiction, but really what drew me to this was how much fun you could have with a character who had to relive a battle over and over again and try to change the outcome,” he says. “It’s a totally new paradigm. Here’s an opportunity to make a film that isn’t going to be like anything else out there – ever. It’s truly unique, and at the same time it’s really fun and exciting. That, to me, is the jackpot.

“At the end of the day I was not making a movie about an alien invasion; I was interested in this arena in terms of the effect it has on the characters. Aliens don’t necessarily bring out the best character development, as is evidenced by a lot of recent alien invasion movies. Dying and repeating the day – that brings out a lot of really interesting character issues.

“I like putting real human beings through extraordinary situations. If you look at *Mr & Mrs Smith*, there’s a real couple, trying to deal with the real insecurities and trust issues of a marriage. There are machine guns and outrageous stuff happening, but all of that is a way of bringing out what’s interesting about the human beings. I thought this was a concept that allowed me to have a great love story between two people where they have to start out from scratch every day, and trying to figure out how to build that was a really exciting challenge, and something

BLUNT FORCE

How Emily Blunt’s Rita Vrataski measures up as a Strong Female Character

Much has been made of the Strong Female Character of late, and for good reason. A recent study by San Diego State University found that just 15 per cent of all protagonists in 2013’s top grossing films were female – an appalling statistic by any measure. But in attempting to bring more three-dimensional women to the big screen, is Hollywood missing the point? Some would argue that while seeing kick-ass ladies kick ass is a very good thing, the SFC is becoming a cliché in itself, creating a stereotype that just doesn’t do film fems justice.

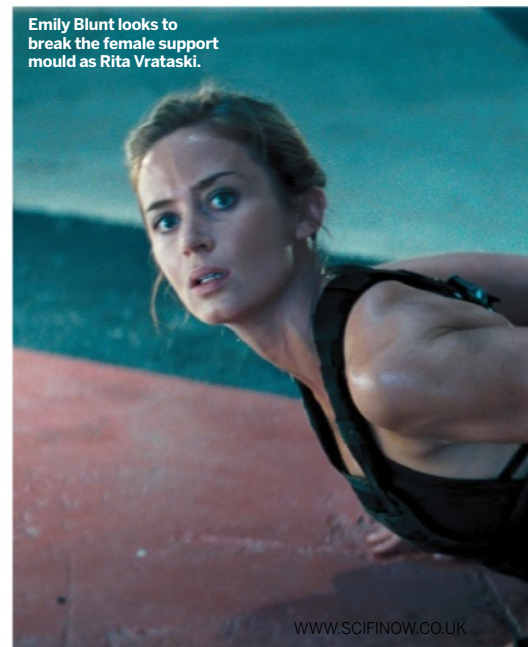
With that in mind, how many of the trope tick-boxes does Emily Blunt’s heroine, Rita Vrataski, fulfil?

WOMAN WITHOUT FEAR

A true warrior, in a nod to the novel’s Japanese origins, the Samurai-esque Rita has no fear of death. She laughs and says something sarcastic in the face of danger! Her life is expendable and she not only considers it inevitable, but even necessary, clearly showing us who the real hero of this film is.

A WARRIOR WITH WIT

We all know a woman who can kick butt is nothing without her wits, so it’s a good job that Rita’s got some smarts. While Cruise’s Cage freaks out about his new-found power, Rita’s the one who decides to use him to win the war against the Mimics with the help of her wise brain and cracking comic timing.



Emily Blunt looks to break the female support mould as Rita Vrataski.

EDGE OF TOMORROW

Tomorrow Never Dies

GOOD WITH GUNS

Gone are the days where chicks in flicks would flinch upon being handed a firearm. Hand her a weapon and she'll show you how to use it, before ruthlessly blowing Tom Cruise's head off at point-blank range with barely a blink. Also, check out the glorious battle-axe that Rita's toting.

EMOTIONLESS HARD-ASS

Cool and collected, dispassionate and stoic, Rita is the antithesis of the overemotional damsel in distress so often seen on screen. Instead, she's fully focused on her mission, and as a result she's given the apt – but rather harsh – nickname of 'Full Metal Bitch'. Ouch.

GORGEOUS, NOT GIRLY

Carefully styled messy hairdo? Yep. Make-up that looks like she's not wearing make-up? Yep. Slightly dirty look about her as if she's been working hard at all this war stuff? Yes again. While Emily Blunt's movie-star good looks can't be denied, everything about Rita screams 'tomboy warrior' – especially the arm muscles.

that Tom [Cruise] and Emily [Blunt] did an extraordinary job of accomplishing."

Speaking of which, the film's stars are themselves an odd pairing: one justifiably described by Liman as "the biggest movie star in the world", and the other as "our generation's Katharine Hepburn." Cruise and Blunt aren't a pairing that most of us would automatically come up with, but it works, which speaks to both the director's casting nous and the cast's talents.

"Tom hasn't necessarily had the strongest female co-leads in his movies, and I think *Edge Of Tomorrow* definitely shows that he really shines when you give him a strong female counterpart," says Liman, who evidently holds both his stars in the highest esteem. "The chemistry was immediate. They're such different people from such different film backgrounds, and their characters on screen are like oil and water, so that dynamic was already there. They're both really funny and charming, and from the first day we worked I was excited to go to the set every day. It was so much fun to be around them, and it was like that from the first second we got to rehearsal."

There's a role reversal here that we don't see very often, too. We all know Cruise as Mr Perfect, whether he's undertaking yet another ridiculous impossible mission or

earnestly saving the world from something or other. But his *Edge Of Tomorrow* character, Lt Col Bill Cage, is something else entirely: a complete wuss.

AN OFFICER BY VIRTUE OF HIS POSITION AS A MILITARY PR MAN, CAGE HAS NEVER SEEN A DAY OF COMBAT IN HIS LIFE. SO WHEN HE ACCIDENTALLY ENDS UP ON THE FRONT

lines of humanity's last desperate attempt to extinguish the alien threat and is cursed to relive it over and over again, he's far more interested in saving himself than the world. While it won't surprise audiences in the way his drug-addled, hyper-sexualised Stacee Jaxx in *Rock Of Ages* did, it's a refreshing opportunity to see the actor do something new – and one he wholeheartedly threw himself into.

"What's awesome about Tom is that he's willing to go there – we're going to make something that's completely different, it's not a character you've ever seen him play before," says Liman.

"Tom is a brilliant comedic actor – truly brilliant. He's really the gutsiest, most courageous actor I've ever worked with, not just gutsy like he'll hang off the side of the Burj Khalifa; he'll be emotionally gutsy and try something he's never done before. He knows he has this brand, and he's willing to go completely against it. ➤

"ALIENS DON'T NECESSARILY BRING OUT THE BEST CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT"

DOUG LIMAN

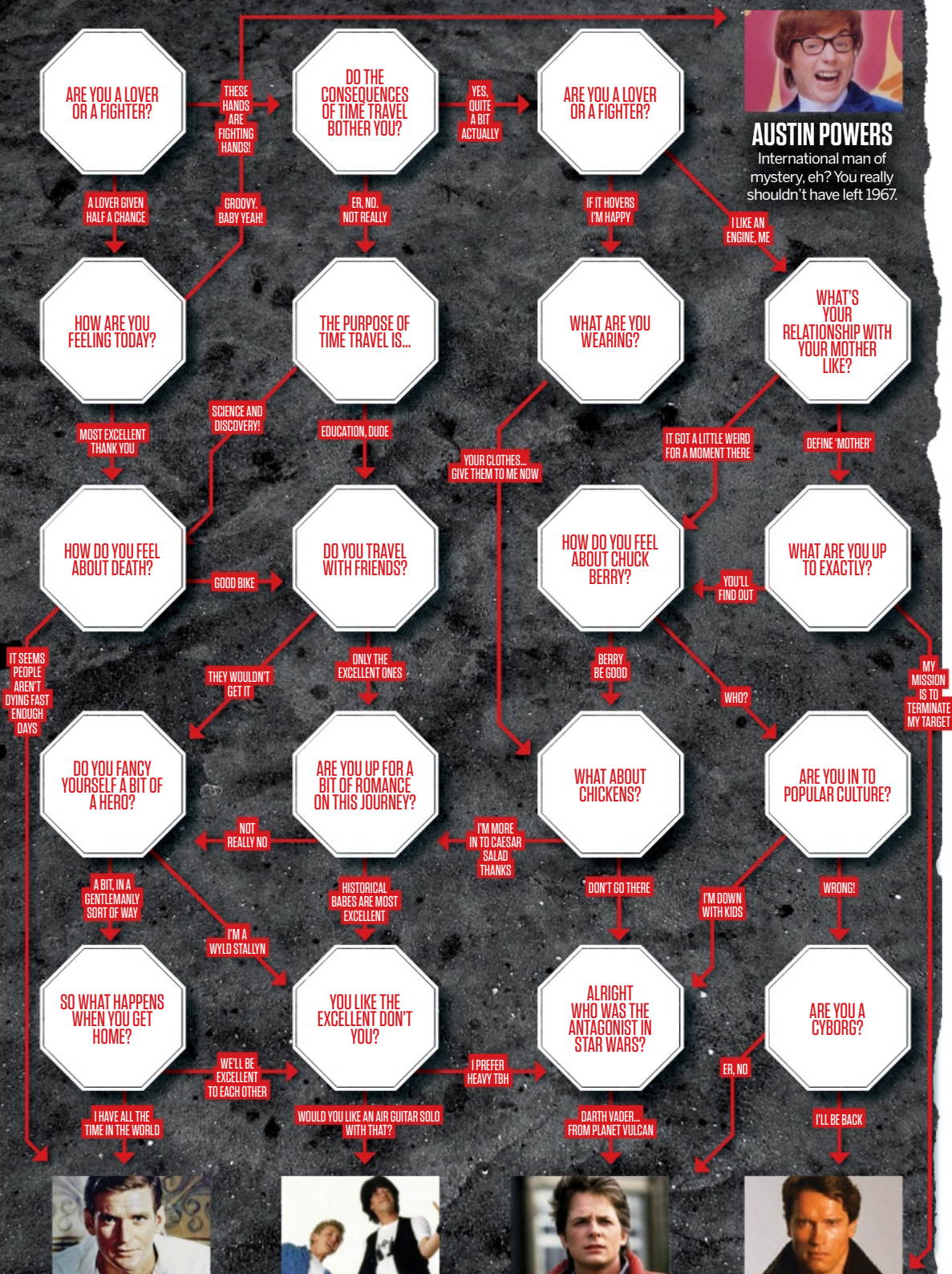


BIG MOVIE

Edge Of Tomorrow

KILLING TIME

Find out whose days you're endlessly reliving with our handy flowchart

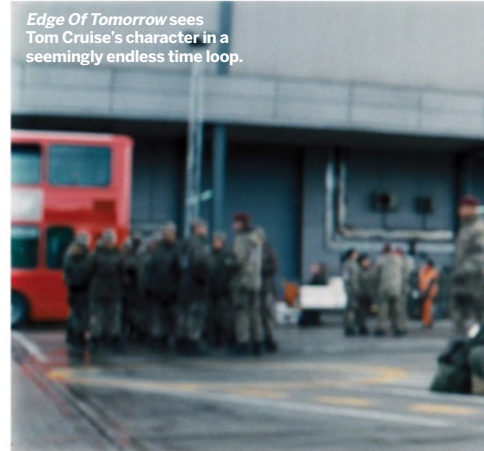


AUSTIN POWERS

International man of mystery, eh? You really shouldn't have left 1967.



Edge Of Tomorrow sees Tom Cruise's character in a seemingly endless time loop.



"It's not like working with Brad Pitt, who's made a lot of movies the mass audience wouldn't have seen. The world has seen every movie Tom Cruise has ever done, so to have the opportunity to come up with a character he hasn't played before and a Tom Cruise you haven't seen before – and for a guy like that to, without hesitation, say 'Let's try it'. He's a total coward in this movie. Not just in the beginning; he's a coward the whole way through. And the number of times he squeals in the movie out of fear – he does an amazing squeal! Other movie stars, in my experience, would be more hesitant about being that vulnerable."

IN CONTRAST, EMILY BLUNT IRONICALLY PLAYS THE CHARACTER WITH BALLS. RITA VRATASKI IS A WARRIOR WOMAN WHO VOLUNTEERED TO FIGHT FOR THE WAR EFFORT, DOING SO WITH

incredible alien ass-kicking success. What's more, she doesn't flutter her eyelashes or swoon on meeting Cage – she sees him as a tactical tool rather than a hot hero. She might not have a superpower, but she's the one who knows how to work a weapon, and she has absolutely no time for his reluctant reservations about learning to use one. There's a reason Rita's comrades call her 'Full Metal Bitch', and there's a reason Liman cast Blunt in the role.

"Emily is the only one we wanted; we didn't have a plan B," he reveals. "She's



H GEORGE WELLS

As a rather brainy sort, your dedication to science will lead to great things. But be warned – you may not like what you find in the future.



BILL AND/OR TED

Let's face it dude, you're really only in this for a bit of fun, and that's fine. But do try and learn something along the way, won't you?



MARTY MCFLY

You should have learned by now that time travel is a terrible, terrible idea. Stop going back and concentrate on the here and now.



THE TERMINATOR

Sure, you're a badass, with your super-strength, sunglasses and that shotgun. But you're also a bit evil. Perhaps it's time to reprogram.



Emily Blunt's character is more than a match for Cruise's Bill Cage.

EDGE OF TOMORROW

Tomorrow Never Dies



Could this be the antidote to more generic sci-fi blockbusters?

an extraordinarily powerful actress. She really stands her ground. Her performance is genius in this movie, and she has it the toughest because she always has to go back to square one with her character.

"She's smart, funny, beautiful and quick – I can't think of another actress who has what she has right now. I really needed an actress who could be Tom's equal. I'm not into the hot chick on the lead guy's side; I like strong female characters, I wasn't interested in making a Tom Cruise movie with the flavour of the moment opposite him. I wanted a real foil, someone who could stand up to him and be smart enough to be his equal. I really couldn't think of anybody but Emily who could pull that off – it was about emotional strength and intelligence."

While the time travel element of *Edge Of Tomorrow* will elicit screams of 'Groundhog Day' from even the most laissez-faire film fan, there's a more relevant and perhaps even poignant parallel to be drawn. Liman is very purposefully echoing the events of World War II as we see the US join the extraterrestrial conflict towards its end. It's a never-ending D-Day with betentacled beasts in the place of Nazis; *Saving Private Ryan* with exo-suits instead of tommy guns. What's more, for once we see a Hollywood battle happen on a global scale.

"That direct parallel to World War II isn't a coincidence," Liman explains. "I loved

"TOM CRUISE IS REALLY THE GUTSIEST, MOST COURAGEOUS ACTOR I'VE EVER WORKED WITH"
DOUG LIMAN

doing an alien movie because you could have an enemy that was easy to identify, that was definitely the enemy – you didn't have to question the morality of it – and then you could focus on character and love stories behind enemy lines.

"We're saving Europe, we're not saving America. Which was a big question: would an American audience care if London gets overrun? Would the world care? These are questions we thought about. Ultimately, it was like, 'I care, so we'll make the audience care.' I wanted to set the film in Europe, I wanted to draw parallels with WWII – ultimately, war movies were my inspiration; I wasn't looking at science fiction movies."

INTERESTINGLY, LIMAN'S INSPIRATION FOR THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE ALSO CAME FROM AN UNUSUAL SOURCE. VAGUELY DESCRIBED IN THE NOVEL AS LARGE "BLOATED FROGS" WITH FOUR


legs and a tail, Sakurazaka's Mimics look a bit like starfish – the first creatures they encountered – and emulated – upon their arrival on Earth. They are fast and powerful, capable of firing rather handy, armour-piercing projectiles from their bodies.

"My inspiration for the aliens was a piece of video on YouTube that was a pulsing cube that was vibrating," says Liman. "I wanted everything about it to be alien to us – it doesn't breathe or eat, it doesn't speak or

walk on two legs. But it simple to quantify – this thing is just extremely good at killing human beings. It couldn't be like anything we'd recognise on Earth. Because it's not a movie about them, so I didn't want to create something that you'd have to spend a lot of time getting to know and understand."

So what we have is an alien invasion movie that's not actually about aliens; a film that stars Tom Cruise completely in contrast with his usual typecasting, an indie actress in her first all-out, hard-ass action role, and a director who readily admits he that figured it all out as he went along.

Whether or not *Edge Of Tomorrow* subverts Hollywood's tried and tested tropes, it at least ought to be applauded for trying. The fact remains that a truly original idea is kind of hard to come by, and there are undoubtedly elements of this film that result in it being as derivative as many blockbusters, but Liman should be commended for his attitude and effort in attempting to create something new. Regardless of its success, there are still plenty of reasons to pay for a ticket.

As Liman puts it: "We have something for everybody. If you love Tom Cruise, you get Tom giving a genius performance. And if you hate Tom Cruise, he dies like 200 times in the movie." You can't say fairer than that. 

Edge Of Tomorrow is in cinemas 30 May.

WHY YOU SHOULD
BE WATCHING
ORPHAN BLACK
SEASON TWO

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

CLONE

ORPHAN BLACK'S BREAKOUT STAR **TATIANA**
CHALLENGES AND THRILLS OF THE SHOW AND

IT'S HARD TO THINK OF ANY ACTOR WHO HAD A TOUGHER JOB LAST YEAR THAN TATIANA MASLANY. BEING THE SERIES LEAD OF A NEW SHOW MUST BE TOUGH WORK – AND WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING AT LEAST FOUR OF THEM, OFTEN IN THE SAME SCENE, THAT'S A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL. HER PERFORMANCES

as the hunted clones of *Orphan Black* made it the must-see sci-fi debut of the year, and it doesn't look like Season Two is going to give her (or us, for that matter) the chance to relax.

"My body doesn't react to it with panic anymore!" laughs Maslany when we discuss the prospect of filming a sequence in which the fiery former street urchin Sarah, unstable soccer mum Alison and warm-hearted science geek Cosima sit down for a discussion about who or what is coming after them. "I know what it's going to be, and I know we can do it and I know that the effects are incredible and it'll work, so it's more about continuing to make it feel as real as possible."

Possibly the biggest compliment that you can pay Maslany – and *Orphan Black* – is how easy it is to forget that it's the same actor playing all these characters. In addition to the leads named above, the show has required her to play characters ranging from German party girls to icy corporate heads, not to mention psychotic Russian killer Helena, with

the prospect of more clones to come in Season Two.

In fact, the roles are so different that when *Orphan Black* shifts focus, it also shifts tones. One of the great things about the show is that there is this sense of constant movement and energy, and Maslany tells us that it's very much present on set too. "Totally, totally!" she enthuses. "We've talked about that on set this season a lot. It's just like I walk on set one day and we're shooting Alison all day and the colours are different and the tone is so different, and there's this room for comedy and heightened suburban hysteria! And then we'll shoot a day with Sarah, it's like drama and family and darker, and the stakes aren't higher necessarily, but they're just different. It does feel like – the crew also says this all the time – it feels like we're shooting a different movie every single day. Yeah, so fun!"

So regarding what we can expect to see from *Orphan Black* in Season Two, there's a lot of ground to cover. Given that we met Sarah first in the pilot, let's begin with her. The first season saw her fighting to earn the right to get her daughter Kira (Skyler Wexler) back from her wary foster mother, Mrs S (Maria Doyle Kennedy), before fighting to keep Kira away from the forces that were coming after her while infiltrating the police force

WOLF

MASLANY TELLS SCIFINOW ABOUT THE WHY SEASON TWO WILL ONLY GET TOUGHER...

as the deceased clone Detective Beth Childs, and discovering that they were caught between the Neolutionist gene-tamperers and the Proletheans, who want the clones dead. With Mrs S, Kira and her sharp-tongued but big-hearted foster brother Felix (Jordan Gravis), Sarah arguably had the biggest support base last season. However, she also had the most to lose, as the season finale showed us when Sarah returned home to find Kira and Mrs S gone.

“SEASON TWO STARTS OFF WITH SARAH ON THE RUN TRYING TO FIND KIRA, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE ANYBODY IS,” TEASES MASLANY. “THE RELATIONSHIP WITH MRS

S is obviously left in a very suspicious and complex place, and it doesn't really become much clearer as we go on. It just becomes more and more complicated, which is so nice to play with these characters who are so alike and need and love each other so much, but we don't know who's side anybody's on. Even as actors we're always negotiating a new dynamic between us. It keeps us on our toes.”

Sarah's not the only clone who found herself in a dark place by the season finale. Although her lover Delphine (Évelyne Brochu) is no longer her monitor, having broken ties with the sinister Neolutionists, Cosima is suffering

from a degenerative illness and is hunting for answers. Her search brings in new clone Jennifer Fitzsimmons, a former Olympic swimmer who fell victim to the same disease, which gives Maslany another new character to bring to life. “It's a mix, it's definitely a mix, right down the middle,” laughs Maslany when we ask how it feels to get a script with yet another character to play. “It's super exciting to get to play somebody new and investigate another life. But it's a daunting thing to do during shooting; the schedule is so intense as it is, and then to try to bring a new life out is a technical nightmare a little bit. But ultimately it's what I signed up for and what I love about the job, and what keeps me totally inspired every single day on the set.”

Meanwhile, saying Alison is in something of a transition is an understatement, after she shocked us all by simply watching her frenemy Ainsley choke to death in her kitchen without lifting a finger to help her. ➤

“IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE SHOOTING A DIFFERENT MOVIE EVERY SINGLE DAY”

TATIANA MASLANY



MUST-SEE TV

Orphan Black

“Yeah, that shocked me so much, and it still kind of shocks me!” agrees Maslany. “When I read that in the script I was like, ‘Oh God, what are we doing? What’s going on, no no no! This can’t happen!’ But then I realised, ‘No, this puts her in the most impossibly difficult position.’ It stretches her to an extent that I don’t think I could have predicted. It’s so out of left-field, and yet it makes so much sense in a way, in her kind of insanity, and it’s given us so much fun stuff to play this season.”

One of the great joys of the last season was watching Alison develop an oddly touching friendship with Felix. The artist/hustler seemed to initially drawn to Alison’s large supply of prescription medication, while she came to rely on him as a friend who could provide unflinching honesty and a lack of judgement. Watching him provide backup as her “acting coach” at a house party while her husband was tied up in the basement was an excellent example of the show’s ability to steer through different genres, and we can look forward to plenty more mismatches in Season Two.

“The writers like to find these unusual pairings, I don’t think they were a predestined connection,” Maslany remembers. “I think they just kind of happened because something about them is so different and yet so similar, so I think it’s sort of an organic thing that happened because Jordan is so incredible, and the way he plays off of Alison is so fun and so different from his dynamic with Sarah. So I think we’ll see more of those odd couples. I just like to share scenes with actors who are in front of me, actually. That’s my favourite!”

Speaking of odd, it’s about time we discussed this season’s big bad. How do you follow a psychotic Ukrainian assassin with strange ideas about what love means? With something even scarier: white-collar villainy. The end of the last season introduced us to Rachel Duncan, a clone herself, only raised by the Neolutionists. She’s got an active interest in bringing Sarah in, and has got her eye on young Kira as the only known child of a clone. There was a twisted heartache behind Helena’s actions, but it looks like Rachel is all business.

“WHEN I READ THAT IN THE SCRIPT I WAS LIKE, ‘OH GOD, WHAT ARE WE DOING? THIS CAN’T HAPPEN!’”

TATIANA MASLANY



The further *Orphan Black* gets, the stranger things get and the more the stakes are raised.



"She's definitely scarier, Rachel," enthuses Maslany. "Because of that stillness, entitlement and quiet power. You don't know exactly what she's capable of, we don't know a lot about what she thinks or what she feels, and we start to peel that away this season and sort of see the real... whatever that person is underneath that icy façade. She's been so much fun to play because I don't think anybody would ever cast me as Rachel! Ever! Never! So I'm really lucky that I get to try her out and test her out a little bit."

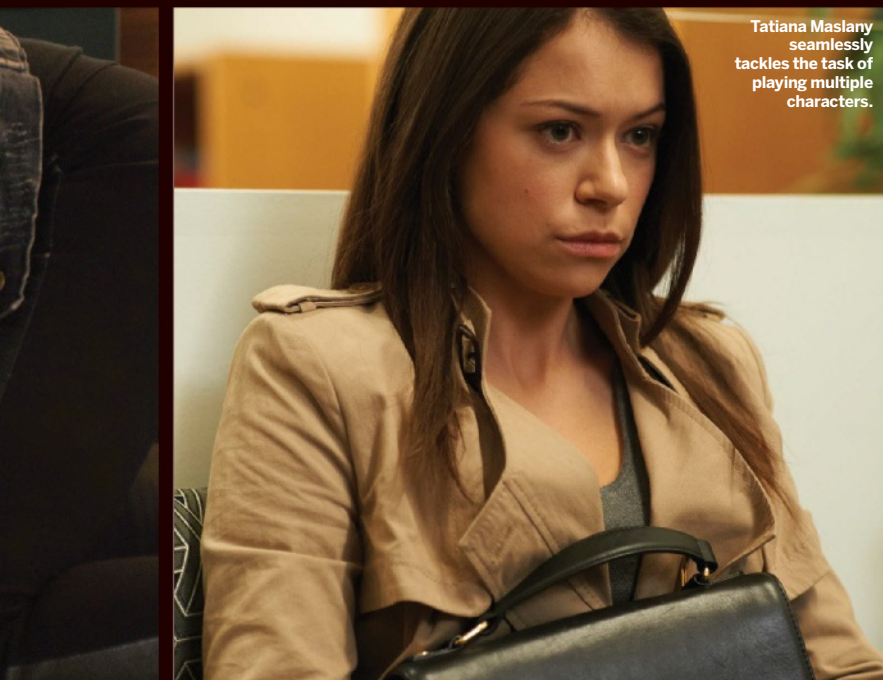
THE IDEA THAT MASLANY WOULDN'T BE A CASTING AGENT'S FIRST THOUGHT SEEMS SLIGHTLY RIDICULOUS NOW. THIS ISN'T A SHOW ABOUT ASPECTS OF ONE PERSON; they're not variations on a theme. Even though we were introduced to Sarah first, Maslany is playing several totally individual characters. "I think Sarah to me has always been the heartbeat of the show, but I don't feel any of the other characters are like extensions of her by any means," she says. "Her throughline is hers, and I think the writers have written the other characters so specifically

that I had never had to be, 'OK, I hope this person doesn't cross into that one,' because their voices are so different. And the way they were written and how they interact with people is different, so I feel like half the work is done there."

Still, half of that amount of work still adds up to a fair amount, so it's hardly surprising when Maslany tells us she's not pressing the writers to give away their secret twists and turns. "Yeah, I try not to think too far ahead," she laughs. "The writers and the creators have been really awesome about keeping me informed about things that might be coming up that I need to know about or that would help me to know about, but for me there is so much to think about on a day to day basis, and also my brain doesn't work well with plot, it just doesn't get it! So I'd rather be in the moment instead of thinking too much about the future, and I kind of have to be like that. Thankfully, most of the characters are in the dark, they're all kind of figuring things out as they go along, so it kind of works!"

Orphan Black returns to BBC3 in April.

Tatiana Maslany seamlessly tackles the task of playing multiple characters.



AND WE ARE ALL TOGETHER...

Which of our favourite sci-fi stars have taken on the most roles in the same sitting?



1 JULIE CHRISTIE (FAHRENHEIT 451)

François Truffaut understood that two Julie Christie performances are better than one, casting her as both the uncaring wife and the rebellious teacher in his film of Ray Bradbury's classic to show two sides of the same coin.

2 TIMOTHY HUTTON (THE DARK HALF)

George A Romero's mixed bag of a Stephen King adaptation stars Timothy Hutton as an author who decides to kill off his heartless pen name George Stark, only for Stark to stake a claim on life by murdering a lot of people.

3 WILLIAM SHATNER (STAR TREK)

A remarkable thespian whose versatility knows no bounds, Shatner took on several variations of Kirk in his time in the captain's

chair. With an evil duplicate, an android duplicate, a Mirror Universe version and a disguised Garth of Izar, he pushed the limits.

4 BEN BROWDER (FARSCAPE)

In the episode 'My Three Crichtons,' our displaced hero manages to get himself split into three versions of himself: Future Crichton, regular Crichton and the Beast. But which Crichton is the most deserving of survival? Oh, and there's clone Crichton too.

5 MICHAEL KEATON (MULTIPLICITY)

What do you do when you don't have enough time in the day? Clone yourself! Keaton learns that the easy answer isn't the best one in Harold Ramis' intermittently funny comedy, as Macho, Sensitive and Stupid start ruining his life.

6 HALLE BERRY (CLOUD ATLAS)

Along with Tom Hanks, Hugo Weaving, Jim Sturgess and Hugh Grant, Berry starred in each of the stories in the Wachowskis' and Tom Tykwer's adaptation of David Mitchell's masterpiece.

7 TRICIA HELFER (BATTLESTAR GALACTICA)

Helper's performance as the various versions of Number Six, the Cylon who appeared in both corporeal and imagined forms, managed to make each feel distinct, but still related.

8 SAM ROCKWELL (MOON)

Three years alone on the Moon is a long haul, but Sam Bell doesn't realise that there is no return to Earth; just another clone waiting to wake up. Can he and a fresh clone work together, or will they fall apart?

“FANNIBALS
WHO ARE VERY
FAMILIAR WITH
THE LITERATURE
REALISE THAT
WE'RE ESSENTIALLY
THOMAS HARRIS
MASH-UP DJs”
BRYAN FULLER



Meat's Murder

WILL GRAHAM IS LEERING OUT OF THE LECTER MASK WHILE HANNIBAL HIMSELF ROAMS FREE AS A RESULT OF SEASON ONE'S SHOCKING CONCLUSION. CREATOR BRYAN FULLER SETS THE TABLE FOR SEASON TWO OF NBC'S STYLISH MURDER BANQUET...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



There are a lot of shows out there that make grand claims about pushing their tortured heroes to the edge, but we'd put good money on Bryan Fuller's *Hannibal* being the first to feature its lead character regurgitating a whole human ear into a sink. "Right!" laughs Fuller. "We've gotta do something different!"

The first season of *Hannibal* was a revelation: gloriously gothic, wonderfully witty and deliciously dark. Fuller skillfully combined the Thomas Harris lore with his own vision for the show to create something that both honoured the source material and created something entirely new. The story of FBI profiler Will Graham (Hugh Dancy)'s descent into madness, propelled by his therapist Dr Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen), was heralded by critics and fans alike as something very special indeed. When it was over, we had to wait out the inevitable cancellation discussions before NBC announced that it would return for a second season. The news was a tremendous relief to the hugely passionate fanbase of Fannibals that had built up, not to mention Fuller himself.

"Well, yeah!" he tells us. "So much work was done in the first season laying down the track to where we're going, so really it was about plucking the fruit from the seeds that were sown last year. There was a kind of energy to the second season because we knew

we had all these toys in the toybox to play with. The fun of it for us is tightly weaving the tapestry of the show so that you can really follow that thread back to the first season, so it was great to be able to continue to weave."

The first season left Will Graham in the darkest place imaginable, but with a glimmer of hope. He may have been imprisoned for Hannibal's crimes as the Chesapeake Ripper, with his boss Jack Crawford (Laurence Fishburne) and even his closest friend Alana Bloom (Caroline Dhavernas) convinced of his guilt, but he knows that his dapper therapist is the one to blame.

"The great thing is that he has no place to go but up, but that doesn't mean that up is not necessarily askew," teases Fuller. "When he launches his retaliation, for lack of a better word, against Hannibal, it is a very intricate design, and in some ways it takes Will in his thirst for justice into even darker territory than he explored in the first season. The difference is that the first season was very much against his will; he was being tragically driven and coerced by Hannibal's therapy and taking advantage of his encephalitis, and this season when he goes to dark places it's by choice. It's a different feel for him because it's very active in a way where he was very much a passive participant to the trip to hell that he took in the first season. This season he's definitely in the driver's seat." ➤



MUST-SEE TV

Hannibal



HANNIBAL'S CARVERY

Dr Hannibal Lecter is delighted to have the pleasure of your company. Our menu this evening is a la carte; any requests or dietary requirements will be ignored. Vegetarians should just go home.

AMUSE-BOUCHE

Black silkie chicken and mushroom soup

Chef notes: All mushrooms are freshly picked from our garden

ENTRÉE

Cold foie gras touchon

Chef notes: Sometimes suffering is necessary to create something beautiful

FIRST COURSE

Sausage scramble

Chef notes: A hearty dose of protein is all-important in the cold winter months

MAIN

Pork loin

Chef notes: Our pork recipe goes back centuries, although we'd ask you not to look up 'long-pig'

DESSERT

Angel cake

Chef notes: It's not the Angel cake you're thinking of



As of the end of Season One, Will Graham is behind bars.

➤ And what of his tormentor? One of the real delights of the first season was watching this growing friendship between the two men. From literally sniffing out his illness to attempting to push him away from the people he cares about, Hannibal clearly wanted to bring his patient around to his way of thinking. With Will imprisoned, Hannibal no longer has unlimited access to the man who was the closest thing he had to a friend. "I think he is very cognisant of the stages of Will's therapy and the levels of hell that he has to travel through to get to the true form of himself," Fuller tells us. "So he recognises that this is a necessary step in his development, and it's unfortunate that he has to be incarcerated to learn those lessons in how to be a better version of Will Graham, but Hannibal sees it as necessary to his recovery from humanity in a way!"

THIS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, WITH WILL BEHIND BARS AND HANNIBAL STILL ACTING AS A CONSULTANT TO THE FBI, FINDS FULLER AND HIS TEAM IN PREVIOUSLY UNEXPLORED TERRITORY. EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE SERIES SO FAR HAS BEEN

contained within a few sentences in *Red Dragon*, but last season saw Fuller start to toy with the previously established timeline just a little bit. Fans were stunned by the early appearance of characters like Dr Frederick Chilton (Raúl Esparza), while there was a two-episode arc dedicated to Jack Crawford's guilt over the disappearance of Miriam Lass (Anna Chlumsky), a young female trainee agent who bore more than a passing resemblance to a certain Agent Starling. For the most part, however, the Harris faithful have been pleased, a reaction that Fuller attributes to counting himself among them.

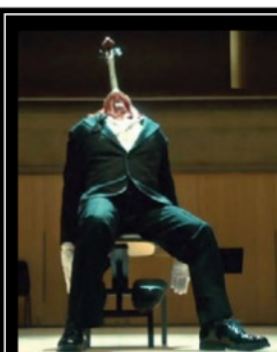


Season Two initially sees Hannibal filling in for Will.



Her relationship with Will having bordered on personal, it'll be interesting to see what's in store for Alana.





A TASTE FOR MUSIC

Bryan Fuller's favourite Hannibal moment

When it comes to picking a favourite baroque murder tableau from *Hannibal*, Bryan Fuller is spoiled for choice. "I've had quite a few," he explains. "It's easier for me to say, 'Ooh, that didn't work,' because most of them I see the merit in."

However, there is one that stands out, from the episode 'Fromage.' "I love the cello man, because it's one of my favourite instruments, and it just vibrates at the same frequency as my sternum chakra or whatever! It goes right to my chest and is very powerful, and to see someone turned into an instrument that way feels like an extension on how we talk about life and the body. There's a lot of influence from David Cronenberg in this show in terms of body dysmorphia and what flesh, spirit and life is."

"Well, I am very much a student of Thomas Harris," explains Fuller. "I love his writing and I love his pursuit of the purple turn of phrase, and we are constantly putting Thomas Harris quotes in the show to really re-infuse the DNA of the spirit of his writing. What's interesting is that as we get more and more into our own version of the stories, Fannibals, who are very familiar with the literature, realise that we're essentially Thomas Harris mash-up DJs."

"We are taking lyrics from one song and mashing them up with the music from another song and laying down a beat track from a third song and rubbing the vinyl in scenes in different ways, so it becomes not necessarily a literal translation, but a blend of different facets that are interpretations of things that happen in *Red Dragon* and *The Silence Of The Lambs*, and woven together in a way that we think is cool. Because of the way the rights work, it's not about the books as much as it is the characters, so that gives you a kind of broad swab of Hannibal Lecter's literary life to pull from, and we don't necessarily pull from it in any kind of linear way. It's more like a theremin as opposed to a piano."

Ah, the rights. One of the concerns with Fuller's ambitious six-season plan for the show – which will eventually incorporate not only the plot of *Red Dragon*, but also *The Silence Of The Lambs* – is that MGM still own the rights to some of the key characters. Fuller seems very calm about the situation, well aware that it's some way off. "We'll approach that when we get to that stage of the storytelling, but for now we just have the characters that originated in *Red Dragon* and

**"VENGEANCE
WILL TAKE
WILL INTO
EVEN DARKER
TERRITORY
THAN HE
EXPLORED IN
THE FIRST
SEASON"**

BRYAN FULLER



characters from the book *Hannibal* that are not Clarice Starling or related to her in any way, shape or form," he laughs.

Still, the fact that Fuller has the rights to the novel *Hannibal* means that this season will see the introduction of two of the most colourful characters into an already deeply purple universe: wealthy lunatic Mason Verger (played by Gary Oldman in Ridley Scott's film adaptation of *Hannibal*) and his troubled sister Margot. The casting could not be more perfect, with *Ginger Snaps* and *American Mary*'s Katharine Isabelle and *Boardwalk Empire*'s Michael Pitt joining the show.

"I took a break from the editing room cutting their scenes in an episode, and they're both great," enthuses Fuller. "The scenes with Michael Pitt and Mads Mikkelsen have been so much fun to cut, because we've always talked about how Mason Verger has to be a bit of the Joker to Hannibal's Batman."

AS WE SAW LAST SEASON, HANNIBAL DOESN'T ALWAYS REACT WELL WHEN HE'S CHALLENGED BY ANOTHER MANIAC, WHICH MASON CERTAINLY IS. "HERE'S THIS GUY WHO'S IN THERAPY WITH HANNIBAL LECTER, BUT HE CLEARLY HAS NO TASTE FOR HIM," FULLER EXPLAINS.

"He just thinks he's an atrocious human being, and the last episode of the Verger arc is one of the darkest comedies that we've done on the show. Michael Pitt brings such a pimp quality to Mason Verger; the first time you see him he's dressed in this fantastic fur coat, and there's a little bit of *The Great Gatsby* meets Scott Disick. He's ➤



MUST-SEE TV

Hannibal

© Nick Robinson



SERIAL STORYTELLING

Professor David Wilson talks Thomas Harris and real killers

Do you think the perception of serial killers as an American phenomenon is accurate?

No. Most criminologists would see the beginning of the phenomenon as Jack the Ripper in 1888. What gave the interest in serial killing a bigger push was the FBI's Behavioural Unit, which was what *Red Dragon* was modelled on. Thomas Harris worked with the FBI, which was looking for more funding. They used the idea of there being more serial killers as a way of pushing forward their demands for greater resources. We date the phenomenon from a British murderer who was real, but the thing that gives us push and momentum is, I think, the stories of Harris based on the profiling done by the FBI.

There does seem to have been a shift from the early Nineties to what we have now.

When *The Silence Of The Lambs* started, we wanted to know the story through Clarice Starling or Will Graham, and by the time we have *Hannibal* we have become engrained in his world. He is a psychiatrist, aesthete and Renaissance man, and talks about fine wines and foods. I think the change of *The Silence Of The Lambs* from when it was first released – when the heroes were the FBI – to what the genre became is an interesting arc in relation to the viewer or reader's attraction to these stories.

Do you think serial killers are our modern mythology?

The public seem to be fascinated by serial killers – not so much by the reality, but by the mediated image. Often, they are attractive personalities, and even flawed serial killers on TV shows like *Dexter* seem to attract people into their world, as opposed to the reality – which, of course, is disgusting.

David Wilson is professor of Criminology at Birmingham City University and an author.



With his professionalism under in question, Jack starts the season in a difficult place.



With such deviations from the books, anything is possible.



Will Hannibal Lecter's mind games finally catch up with him?

➤ fantastically styled, and Michael had so much fun with the role. It's been delightful to cut him because he is trying everything and really embracing the kind of haute-creep capacity of this character, and it's really exciting. I'm eager for people to take a peek at what he does, because I think it will be certainly iconic in the Thomas Harris legacy of these characters."

IT'S AN ENTICING PROPOSITION, AND ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF FULLER BOTH HONOURING AND EXPANDING THE HARRIS UNIVERSE. HOWEVER, AS WITH ANY BRYAN FULLER SHOW, THERE'S ALWAYS THE ANXIETY THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO LAST FOREVER. NBC HAVE PROMOTED THE SECOND SEASON OF

the show a lot more intensely than the first, and Fuller tells us that he's thrilled with their treatment of his baby.

"Yes, absolutely," he stresses. "NBC has always been very supportive of the show, and particularly when you see the second season they've really allowed us to tell the story that we wanted to tell with the elements that we needed to tell it. They realise that we are psychological horror, that we are a very cinematic representation of the *Hannibal* story, and they have been very generous with Standards and Practices and allowing us to go places that no one would allow us to go on any other broadcast network. So they have been incredibly supportive."

While we can all revel in the fact that Fuller's vision arrived on our screens undiluted, it's easy to forget how it could all have gone horribly askew in the wrong hands. "I never thought about, 'We

have to prove that this a valid television show' as much as I wanted to bring a sense of elegance and psychological horror to an episodic story," Fuller remembers. "I love psychological horror, and I think there's a different vibration of modern horror that is now kind of circling back around from a lot of the more egregious 'torture porn' aspects to really interesting, innovative turns on the ghost story, returning to these creepy, undulating psychological horror movies."

"So I was really excited about a psychological horror that is a meditation not only on death, but the nature of male friendships, and that was really intriguing to me, and that felt like it was a different point of view to explore this character and what he is like in society with the capacity for friendship. That felt like it was a turn on the character that I hadn't seen yet, and thought we could add to the mythology as opposed to just being redundant."

It's a take that fans and critics have fallen in love with, and Fuller stresses the importance of the Fannibals' continuing support. "The ratings for the show in the US are not great," acknowledges Fuller. "But the critical acclaim for the show has been very strong, we have a very passionate fanbase, and it was because of the critical acclaim and the passionate fanbase that we got a second season, so we're hoping that we're able to ride that wave into a third season."

We've got our napkins ready. ☞

Hannibal is airing now Sky Living.



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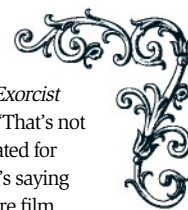
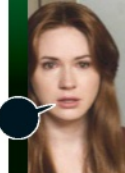


PREY WHAT YOU SEE

WORDS
JONATHAN HATFULL
INTERVIEWS
STEVEN NASH

**KAREN
GILLAN
& MIKE
FLANAGAN**
TELL US WHY
INDIE HORROR
OCULUS IS
THE SCARIEST
FILM OF THE
SUMMER...





A mirror in itself is not inherently scary," Mike Flanagan tells us. That may be true, but the fact is that few home fittings have caused genre fans as much anxiety as that simple piece of reflective glass. From showing us our dark reflections to giving us the most basic "BOO!" jump scare, the mirror has been an integral piece of the haunted house since evil first took up residence there, and indie film sensation *Oculus* is about to put a chilling new spin on that old tradition.

The film stars Karen Gillan as Kaylie Russell, a woman determined to prove that her brother Tim (Brenton Thwaites) is innocent of murder. She intends to show the world that the crime had something to do with the mirror at her family home, which she believes is inhabited by a supernatural force. Provoking an evil entity into action, however, is rarely a good idea.

Oculus is based on a series of short films written and directed by Flanagan, and has ridden a wave of acclaim since its debut at the Toronto Film Festival into a big distribution deal with Relativity and Blumhouse. Its journey from fest to multiplex is an example of that very rare and very exciting thing: the low-budget indie that finds the studio support it needs to go head to head with the status quo.

"As a horror fan, 90 per cent of what I watch is bad," states Flanagan. "And you can't connect to it. It relies on gore and shock at the expense of character development. I think the genre is capable of so much more; it's just much harder. I think studios look at it and are like, 'Well, we don't need it to be difficult, because if we throw a little bit of money at it, people will show up just to be startled.' I think that's sad and lazy. Unfortunately, that helps give this picture of the genre that it's less valid, interesting and artistic than some of the others. But movies

like *The Shining* and like *The Exorcist* routinely come along and say, 'That's not true.' *The Exorcist* was nominated for Best Picture. That's huge. That's saying that not only is this a great genre film, but a great film, period. The genre is capable of so much. It's just a shame that a lot of it tries to go the easy way and be simple, and go for the lowest common denominator."

'Lowest common denominator' is not an accusation that can easily be levelled against *Oculus*. Flanagan's story has plenty of scares, but it also understands that if you want the audience to be truly frightened, they need to be disorientated and they need to care. As Kaylie and Tim face their fears, their present bleeds into their past and their traumatic family history comes back to grab them by the throat. This is a haunted house film that looks less towards the recent success of *Paranormal Activity* and instead takes its cues from the heart-rending and mind-bending horrors from Japan and South Korea that made such an impact in the early 21st Century.

LIKE A LOT OF HORROR FANS, I GOT VERY QUICKLY JADED BY AMERICAN HORROR CINEMA," FLANAGAN REMEMBERS. "IT FELT LIKE WE WERE DOING A LOT OF THE SAME things again and again and again. So when the J-horror movement really picked up, I saw *Ju-On: The Curse* in 2004, shortly before we made the short, and the non-linear timeline was so unapologetically going to the audience, 'OK, you are going to have to put the pieces together.' I thought that was so cool and brave. It was such a strikingly scary film, relentlessly so, and then I really started chasing after movies, like *A Tale Of Two Sisters* and *The Eye*."

Flanagan wasn't the only one on set who had one eye on J-horror. *Doctor Who* fans will tell you that Gillan had to face more than a few terrifying enemies in her time in the TARDIS, but *Oculus* gave her the chance to ➤

"I LOVE HORROR FILMS, BUT THE ONES THAT ARE TRULY SCARY ARE THE SLOW BURNERS"

KAREN GILLAN





THRACE YOUR FEARS



Katee Sackhoff tells SciFiNow what scares her

Your role in *Oculus* – a mother of two – is very unlike your previous roles. What made you choose it?

I really loved the fact that we saw, from Marie, this vulnerability she had, and this obsession she had with mirrors before the mirror took her. I wanted to really make the audience love this family and understand this family, and ultimately feel heartbroken for these children and what they had to go through. And Mike [Flanagan] just did a phenomenal job of pulling you on this slow ride that was engaging the entire time, and then the last 30 minutes just punched you in the face repeatedly.

Could you take anything from *Battlestar Galactica* into this?

For me, just the physicality. I think Mike had said to me, "Just go big or go home with her, because it's never going to be too much." So we came up with this animal thing for her, so I would crawl on the ground and throw my body all over the place. I think that coming from action movies

and TV shows really helped with that, for sure.

Are you already a big horror fan?

There are enough things that scare the shit out of me in my real life already. I tend to be mostly scared of the movies of something that could really happen; as actors, we spend a lot of time on the road and in different places, so I tend

the shit out of me – things that could really happen.

Did anyone have a weird experience with that mirror?

I just took a mirror off the wall in the rental house I am in at the moment, and locked it in the closet. I couldn't sleep. Then I found an ant in the bed, and that freaked me out because the sheets were black. So I

was sleeping, then the ant was there, so I was like, "Oh my God, I have to wake up at 4am, this is going to suck," then I rolled over and the mirror was there. Then I was

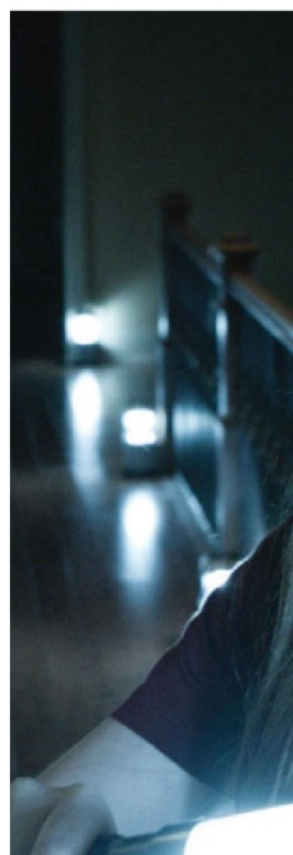
like, "OK, that's freaking me out." So I went on Twitter, and everyone was talking about *Oculus* and mirrors and how scary it was, and I was like, "Great!" but after 15 minutes I was laying there and thinking, "I know I am such an idiot, but I am taking that fucking mirror down!" And I took it off the wall, hid it in the closet and shut the closet door because that would – God forbid – stop the ghost if it got out! It's still down...

"THE LAST 30 MINUTES JUST PUNCHED YOU IN THE FACE REPEATEDLY"

to wake up in the middle of the night and run into walls a lot, and forget where I am. So for me, my biggest fear is things that can actually happen, like someone tried to open my hotel room one night, the chain was rattling and I was like, "Oh my God! What is happening?" It's just those weird things that come from the fact you are constantly not home, so I am never in a comfortable place. So those type of horror movies scare



Oculus looks to the best of J-Horror for inspiration.



Katee Sackhoff goes against type as matriarch Marie.



The film flits between years in a nod to the best of period horror.

Karen Gillan is open about her love of horror.



GO TO THE MIRROR

The five best reflective scares in horror

DEAD OF NIGHT

An antique mirror provides a newly married man with a beguiling glimpse of another life without his wife. How far will he go to get it?



REPULSION

Troubled young Catherine Deneuve has deep issues with the opposite sex, but is the man who suddenly appears in her mirror real or imaginary?



THE SHINING

Jack Nicholson finds out what's in Room 237 when he blithely makes out with the beautiful woman in the bathtub, only to see her true reflection.



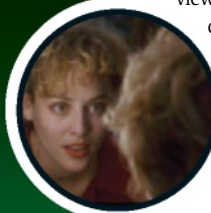
AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

David Naughton's titular tourist gets a scare when his dead buddy Jack shows up to remind him to kill himself before the next full moon.



CANDYMAN

Arguably the scariest of all the scary mirror films, *Candyman* told us that all you had to do was look into the mirror and say his name five times...



take on the otherworldly in an environment that will send everyone scurrying behind the sofa. "I love horror films," she enthuses. "I am a huge horror film fan, so this was really exciting for me. I love cheesy slasher films for the gore aspect, but really, the ones that are truly scary are the slow-burners that really build up to things. I love *The Ring*."

Flanagan worked hard to ensure that there was a strong emotional anchor at the heart of the film, which Gillan tells us was the key to securing her involvement in the lead. "One of the things I loved about this script so much was the time that it devoted to the characters," she reveals. "We really see them develop before things happen to them, so we are invested in them and care. We really earn the scares, which really excited me."

"That was the biggest priority," agrees Flanagan. "If we pull out the horror elements, the story still has to stand up and function as just a basic family tragedy, and the characters have to stand up and function, and if they don't at any point, we have to go back to the drawing board. I think often in the genre, story, character and humanity are left at the door, because there is a presumption that the audience doesn't need it, because they come for the genre elements and that's all you really need."

Even so, with a script where timelines blur and the narrative attempts to wrong-foot the audience, good casting is vital if you want viewers to identify with and root for your characters in peril. "All the jumps and transitions were present in the original script, so maintaining the continuity emotionally was tough, and was landing a lot of pressure on the cast," explains Flanagan. Luckily for him, his casting

instincts were dead on. In addition to Gillan, *Oculus* also stars *Battlestar Galactica*'s

Katee Sackhoff as Kaylie and Tim's mother Marie, as well as *Argo*'s Rory Cochrane as their father Alan. In fact, Sackhoff's influence on *Oculus* goes all the way back to the short film. "Back in 2006, the voice that we used was Katee Sackhoff," remembers Flanagan. "We had a picture of her on the wall. She was the original archetype for Kaylie. So it ended up being really amazing that we had her in the movie as Marie, because her presence and her strength, the elements that we were drawing from her work on *Battlestar* really set the template for Karen's character."

SACKHOFF MAY HAVE BEEN THE TEMPLATE, BUT FLANAGAN TELLS US THAT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO MAKE THE FILM, HE HAD HIS HEART SET ON GILLAN. "I AM A HUGE

Whovian," he enthuses. "Karen was the first name I threw out when it came time to cast. I thought it would be perfect for her, and that she could bring such a unique and very strong, charismatic presence to it. It's not every day that the first choice for the part is cast; that almost never happens. That was really exciting."

For her part, Gillan found that the film wasn't easy to shake off. "I'm not really a method actor, so it doesn't really stay with me," she reveals. "But on this film – and no other thing I have worked on has had this effect – there were a couple of scenes that stayed with me for two days afterwards."

However, the risk of scarring Amy Pond and Kara Thrace was a chance that Flanagan was willing to take, and the director tells us that he couldn't be happier to have two of nerd culture's best-loved talents headlining *Oculus*. "They represent, from their TV work, two of the strongest actresses working, so it was really exciting to put them into a context I hadn't really seen before from either one of them," explains Flanagan. "So it was a fanboy's dream come true, but then again, this had better come off, or I am never going to be able to show my face at [San Diego] Comic Con again!" ☞

Oculus will be released on 13 June.



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of the entertainment
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★★★★★ Outstanding ★★★★ Thoroughly entertaining ★★★ Good but somewhat lacking ★★ Fair at best ★ Avoid as you should *Gallowwalkers*



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68 THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2

"A CHARACTER-CENTRIC
MASTERPIECE"

FILM INFO

Released

Out now

Certificate

12A

Director

Marc Webb

Screenwriters

Alex Kurtzman, Roberto Orci, Jeff Pinkner

Cast

Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone, Jamie Foxx, Dane DeHaan

Distributor

Sony Pictures

Running Time

142 mins



THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2

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Electric boogaloo

WHAT'S THE SKINNY ON THE SINISTER SIX?

The *Sinister Six* spin-off movie will feature the webslinger's most infamous supervillains, which first appeared in 1964. Headed by Doctor Octopus, they included Electro, Mysterio, Kraven, Sandman and the Vulture. There's some alterations to the line-up, however, as Green Goblin appears to be the leader and Rhino wreaks havoc in his OsCorp-built suit. Excitingly, it will be directed by *The Cabin In The Woods*' Drew Goddard, who's also penning the *Daredevil* pilot for Netflix.



Watching The Amazing Spider-Man 2

is like freefalling from a 60-storey building – a complete heart-in-your-mouth head rush from start to finish. Marc Webb swings in and out of comic-book lore so often that even those who are up to date with their reading will be left in a spin. There's the ongoing mystery of what happened to Peter Parker (Andrew Garfield)'s parents, his on-off relationship with Gwen Stacy (Emma Stone), the introduction of notorious frenemy Harry Osborn (Dane DeHaan) and the latest OsCorp experiment-gone-awry, Electro (Jamie Foxx). What could have been a tangled web of plot threads driven purely by action becomes a character-centric masterpiece.

Garfield quips and thwips with expert timing, which this film sees him doing more of than ever. Once he's graduated from high school, we hear he's sold the odd selfie to the *Daily Bugle*, but it's the quietly grieving Aunt May (Sally Field) who's working extra shifts to fund his heroics. The police force relies on him and young would-be webcrawlers adore him, but the mean streets of Manhattan are haunted by



visions of Gwen's late father, whose dying wish was that Peter leaves his girl alone. She's the brightest and most charismatic squeeze in the genre, and thankfully, she has other ideas. The sparks that fly between these two rival that of Electro.

The high-voltage villain may be another sympathetic foe in the vein of 2012's Dr Curt Connors/Lizard, but at least the CGI holds up, which is no mean feat considering he's a essentially human rave stick. As Max Dillon – a gap-toothed self-professed 'nobody' – he can't believe his luck when Spidey saves his life. The pity parade is laid on pretty thick though, especially when the only guests at his birthday party are a tank full of eels. It's one of the well-known symptoms of supervillainy, but there's more to his transformation than being evil just because the costume fits.

More than any other franchise, this looks and sounds like a comic-book brought to life. From the slow-mo showdowns in Times Square to the script that's loaded with Stan Lee-style zingers, it's as if someone's switched on the light after multiple summers' of 'dark and gritty' superhero flicks. The only element it shares with *The Dark Knight* trilogy is the thrashing score by composer Hans Zimmer that complements the nature of Electro's power.

Harry Osborn is another unintentional nemesis, born out of a desperate need to

sidestep the same fate as his green-gilled father Norman (Oscar-winner Chris Cooper). DeHaan plays the part of the troubled rich kid with slimy supervillain hair ("A butler holds the hairdryer while I work the comb," he grins). Watching the trailer, it was tricky to see how these misfits could be crammed into one film, but what connects them is just that: they're united in their loneliness.

Smashing through any nuance is Paul Giamatti's Rhino, a hammy Russian mobster who should have been cut from the movie, along with Marton Csokas' asylum scientist and Colm Feore's OsCorp exec. How they even got so far as to film Shailene Woodley's scenes as Mary Jane is inconceivable given the already saggy running time. The credits should have rolled long before Rhino had the chance to pull up his pants (blame Spidey) and jump into a giant mech suit. It's clear why these choices were made, though: Sony is devising an expanded universe to rival Marvel's own, and there's constantly one eye on the bigger picture – and we've got to say, it's one heck of a view from up here.

Jodie Tyley
VERDICT ★★★★★

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter
Non-stop action with a liberal dose of silliness.



THE LAST DAYS ON MARS

Take a look at the spaceman, eaten up by parasites

Details 15 // 98 mins // Out now **Director** Ruairi Robinson **Screenwriter** Clive Dawson
Cast Liev Schreiber, Romola Garai, Olivia Williams, Elias Koteas **Distributor** Universal



The last day on the job proves as deadly as ever in Ruairi Robinson's doggedly solid sci-fi/horror, which takes an excellent cast and puts

them through the usual terrors of leaving Earth.

The second research mission to Mars is well into the final hours of its six-month stretch when they discover organic life. However, when an accident claims the life of a crew member, it becomes apparent that the bacteria has some aggressive characteristics.

Everything about *The Last Days On Mars* feels familiar, and Robinson's influences are very much in evidence. From the unavoidable genre-definers like *Alien* to more recent stand-outs such as *Moon* and *Sunshine*, the shadow cast over the film is so large that escaping it proves impossible.

It doesn't help that the central plot, based on a short story by Sydney J Bounds, strides along the well-worn path of the alien-parasite-infects-crew-and-turns-them-into-monsters plot without ever really taking a detour. If you've seen the *Doctor Who* story 'The

Waters Of Mars' then you'll get the general idea.

The heavy lifting falls to Robinson and the cast, who have the task of making sure we care enough about these scientists to hope that an alien bacteria doesn't turn them into bloodthirsty monsters. Fortunately, Robinson makes the most of his limitations and creates some genuinely tense sequences as he turns the screws on his characters.

Crucially, the casting is perfect. Liev Schreiber makes for a compelling lead as claustrophobic engineer Vincent, ably backed up by *The Hour's* Romola Garai (making the most of an underwritten part), *The Fades'* Johnny Harris and *Weekend's* Tom Cullen. Elias Koteas can be relied upon to bring nuance to his heavy-hearted commander, but it's Olivia Williams who steals the film with a ferocious turn as acerbic scientist Kim, who acts as the voice of the audience when it comes to their survival.

While there's nothing here that will really surprise, *The Last Days On Mars* provides just enough body horror chills to merit a look, and the excellent cast bumps it up a whole extra star.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★☆☆☆



OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Sunshine
Danny Boyle's philosophical sci-fi thriller only improves over time, despite that divisive final third.



WILLOW CREEK

Search for Sasquatch

Details 15 // 78 mins // Out now **Director** Bobcat Goldthwait **Screenwriter** Evan Daugherty **Cast** Alexie Gilmore, Bryce Johnson **Distributor** Kaleidoscope Films



The Bigfoot myth is one of those enduring tall tales that no amount of lack of evidence can seem to shake.

Bobcat Goldthwait is the perfect filmmaker to investigate the strange and eccentric culture surrounding the story (everything from Bigfoot burgers to folk songs), but what is a surprise is his ability to turn those knowing giggles into real scares by using the found-footage technique to great effect.

Jim (Bryce Johnson) has decided to set out on the Bigfoot trail and document his search for Sasquatch. Along for the ride is his girlfriend Kelly (Alexie Gilmore), who is clearly less enthused than her partner, but still supportive of his ambition. The locals don't respond very well to Jim's irreverent treatment of local heritage sites, but that should all change once they get into the woods – right?

Goldthwait has shown a gift for depicting America's dark underbelly, whether it be dog lovers (*Sleeping Dogs*), teen death (*World's Greatest Dad*) or mass media (*God Bless America*). The first half or so of *Willow*

Creek follows a similar path, albeit with his claws slightly retracted. There's less of a sense of satire here; simply observation, which is appropriate enough considering the found-footage format.

Speaking of found footage, Goldthwait effortlessly adapts the style to his purposes. Horror and sly humour combine to great effect as the tension builds (a sex tape joke takes on unexpected levels), and the casting is spot on. Johnson and Gilmore are totally convincing as a couple, with Jim's excitement and determination blinding him to the fact that Kelly might not be feeling as invested as he is.

But what of the scares? Early on, Goldthwait uses the traditionally threatening locals who might, in a less naturalistic film, make us raise an eyebrow. However, as Jim and Kelly head off on the Patterson-Gimlin trail, the question of who or what is out there in the woods becomes increasingly terrifying until a bravura 19-minute single take shot stretches our nerves to breaking point. Witty and scary, *Willow Creek* is a gem.

Jonathan Hatfull
FILM ★★★★★

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



The Borderlands
This recent British found-footage horror also falls into the smart and scary category.



47 RONIN Losing the way of the Samurai

Details 12 // 119 mins // 2013 // **DVD** • **iTunes** • **blinkerbox** // **Released** 12 May
Director Carl Rinsch **Cast** Keanu Reeves, Hiroiyuki Sanada, Ko Shibasaki, Rinko Kikuchi, Tadanobu Asano **Distributor** Universal Pictures UK



With a Rotten Tomatoes score of 13 per cent at the time of writing, as well as the stigma of being unable to recoup its budget in box office receipts, it's fair to say that *47 Ronin* wasn't exactly a roaring success. However, it would be unfair to pin its failure entirely on the film itself, as in truth it isn't as bad as you might have heard.

Sure, it possesses an identity crisis of its own creation in seemingly being unable to decide whether its lead is put-upon slave Kai (Keanu Reeves) or fallen warrior Oishi (Hiroiyuki Sanada), and doesn't so much end as stutter to the most abrupt of conclusions, but it's all perfectly inoffensive stuff.

The action sequences – if not the plot that drives them – are sufficiently rousing, even if they are arguably too few and far between. Moreover, you get the sense that the cast and crew genuinely *care* about their characters, investing in them to the extent that

to be cynical about the film's failings would be more than a bit cruel.

Reeves in particular gives it his all, belying the tonal inconsistencies of the script to deliver a performance that if nothing else, could well have the effect of wishing you saw more of him in mainstream Hollywood. Sanada too is dependable as always, and Rinko Kikuchi adds another line to her repertoire as witch Mizuki, embellishing what is an underwritten role into one of the film's most memorable characters.

47 Ronin clearly has its faults, and while the misjudged marketing campaign – the prominence of skeletal-tattooed Rick Genest on the poster, despite his literally blink-and-you'll-miss-it appearance being once such example – undoubtedly played a part, its faults are there for all to see. Nonetheless, it's far from awful, falling squarely alongside *John Carter*, *The Lone Ranger* and *Green Lantern* in the films-that-weren't-as-bad-as-everyone-said camp, and as such isn't a complete waste of time.

Steve Wright
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



13 Assassins
 Another baggy historical adap. Takashi Miike's thriller is fast, frenetic and sometimes funny.

FROZEN Cold comfort

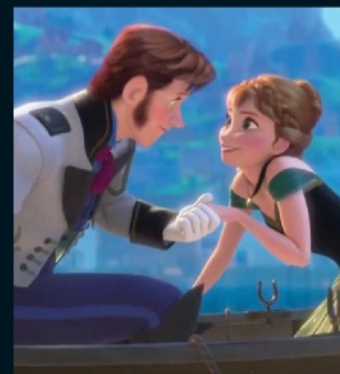
Details PG // 102 mins // 2013 // **DVD** • **iTunes** • **blinkerbox** // **Released** Out now
Directors Chris Buck, Jennifer Lee **Cast** Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel, Jonathan Groff, Josh Gad **Distributor** Walt Disney Home Entertainment



The bar for a feminist Disney film is so woefully low that all it takes is a princess to *not* marry the prince (*Brave*) or for true love to be sisterly instead of romantic (*Frozen*) and the war's as good as won.

Global mega-sensation *Frozen* has climbed to the top with a mixture of Top 40 fodder, eschewing the timeless West End numbers for a big balls-out contemporary ballad that will date about as well as *High School Musical*, and constricting its progressiveness to a single moment at the climax.

Sure, it eventually subverts expectations, but it's tough to ignore the hour spent carefully reinforcing expectation, and the clichés that go unaddressed, like the unrealistic Barbie body-shapes, the clunky



great *Lady & The Tramp* romance and foreign-accented bad guy.

Still, there's some good songs, great costumes, a funny snowman and jaw-dropping lighting effects. Just don't go thinking that *Frozen* is a great big watershed moment for the house that *Snow White* built.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE MARKED ONES On your marks

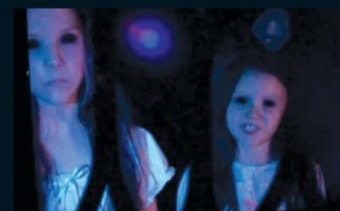
Details 15 // 84 mins // 2013 // **DVD** • **iTunes** • **blinkerbox** // **Released** Out now
Director Christopher B Landon **Cast** Andrew Jacobs, Jorge Diaz, Gabrielle Walsh **Distributor** Paramount Home Media Division



Nobody had any expectations worth uttering in polite company considering this film's roots

in mediocre door-slammer *Paranormal Activity*, but Latino spin-off *The Marked Ones* is surprisingly mad and engrossing.

Despite that old found-footage gripe about the camera's constant presence seeming increasingly unlikely and lukewarm leftovers masquerading as mythology (it all ties into the first and third, if you care), great scares come shrieking literally out of nowhere, and for the first 40 minutes it plays out like a *Chronicle*-style reboot of Marvel's Brother Voodoo as hapless victim-to-be Jesse (Andrew Jacobs) starts



exploring his demonic superpowers to the amusement of his friends.

Soon, events take a turn for the darker, and disturbing little vignettes rub up against big dumb fun action scenes, reaching something of a tonal plateau with a gangbanger gunning down howling witches with his pump-action shotgun that helps inoculate you against the unbelievably silly ending.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★





MOON MAN Total eclipse of the heart

Details U // 95 mins // 2012 // **DVD** • **bluetooth** • **iTunes** // **Released** Out now
Directors Stephan Schesch, Sarah Clara Weber **Cast** Katharina Thalback, Michael McElhatton, Pat Laffan, Paul McLoone **Distributor** Wildcard Distribution



Disney producers would tear their hair out at the sight of this odd little delight. *Moon Man* gleefully disobeys all rules of Hollywood storytelling, with whole chunks of time going by without the story progressing in any sort of meaningful way. It is a film that meanders leisurely along, stopping – literally – to smell the oil-slick-coloured flowers on the way. The dialogue is minimal, the animation deceptively simple and the storyline slight at best. Moreover, there's not a talking animal in sight, although there is a banjo-playing cricket.

Moon Man, made in 2012 but only dubbed into English recently, is faithful to the spirit of Tomi Ungerer's children's book, in which the titular man in the moon takes a comet-ride to Earth and falls foul of the ruling elite. The film even maintains some of Ungerer's more subversive elements, especially in the depiction of the fascist President of Earth and his band



of adoring sycophants. There are also nightmarish elements alongside the humour, as the faces of party-goers warp with greed and rallies are held in front of colourless subjects.

But by and large, this is a sweet tale of a stranger arriving on Earth and learning the true meaning of friendship. The relationship between mad scientist Dr Bunsen and the Moon Man is adorably reminiscent of *ET*, and the regular cutaways to the children of Earth trying to convince their parents that they can't sleep without the man in the moon add a lovely air of nostalgia to the mix.

But the main thing you can't help taking away with you is just how utterly mental this film is. There's a boom-chicka-wah-wah seduction scene, a short burst of *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* and a countryside littered with impossible creatures and inexplicable ice cream men.

It will certainly be a little too weird for some tastes, and too slow for children raised on the likes of *Shrek*. It is probably best enjoyed by adults looking to while away an afternoon dreaming of all the possibilities that lived in their childhood imaginations.

Abigail Chandler
VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Secret Of Kells
 Beautiful visions and equally impressive world-building abound in this Celtic fantasy fable.

RAZE Fight night

Details 18 // 87 mins // 2013 // **DVD** // **Released** 16 June **Director** Josh C Waller
Cast Zoë Bell, Rachel Nichols, Tracie Thoms **Distributor** Koch Media



Raze has a simple pitch: bad-ass women are kidnapped and forced into fights to the death until only one is left standing.

Director Josh C Waller makes no great effort and any point to over-complicate things; instead, he makes the most of what he has to work with to good effect.

It helps no end that the film is led by Zoë Bell. The occasional Tarantino muse continues to show that she should be a much bigger star by now, giving a strong performance and delivering bone-crunching fight sequences.



There's good support from her *Death Proof* co-star Tracie Thoms and *Continuum*'s Rachel Nichols, while Doug Jones and Sherilyn Fenn provide a suitably off-key quality as the games' organisers. *Raze* also avoids the predictable pitfalls of its 'kidnapped women fight!' premise, although it doesn't explore it very far beyond Jones and Fenn exultantly calling their gladiators Maenads.

Raze doesn't try to mask its B-movie nature, delivering on its promise of a raw and brutal action-horror flick, while Bell gives an A-list performance.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★★★★



TOURIST TRAP Valley of the dolls

Details 15 // 90 mins // 1979 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now **Director** David Schmoeller
Cast Chuck Connors, Jocelyn Jones, Jon Van Ness **Distributor** 88 Films



Tourist Trap comes bearing the endorsement of horror's head honcho, and although it's easy to see why Stephen

King gave it a mention in his horror critique *Danse Macabre*, first-time viewers should be warned that time hasn't been tremendously kind to this mannequin horror.

A group of young tourists stop off at a roadside 'attraction' run by the affable Mr Slausen (Chuck Connors). After a quick skinny dip in the adjacent waterfall, they find a waxwork museum, where the exhibits seem to have taken on a life of their own.

There's a definite charm to the slightly confused tonal soup, as influences from films as varied as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *House Of Wax* can be felt.



Mannequins are never not creepy, and the lingering shots of their misshapen faces pack a good deal more chills than the masked killer and chase sequences. Finally, there's Connors' performance, as the steely jawed Hollywood veteran proves to be surprisingly game for some real silliness.

Although *Tourist Trap* has dated, it's intermittently eerie and generally good fun, and the ending packs a punch.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★★★★

ROBOCOP

Frankenstein's mech

Details 15 // 117 mins // 2014 // // **Released** 9 June
Director José Padilha **Cast** Joel Kinnaman, Gary Oldman, Michael Keaton, Abbie Cornish
Distributor StudioCanal



Having weathered the storm of scorn and disinterest that met its announcement, development and release, José Padilha's

RoboCop remake can now be taken on its own merits. Defenders of Paul Verhoeven's vision can rest easy; when Padilha mimics the original it comes off worse, but when he goes off-book things get interesting.

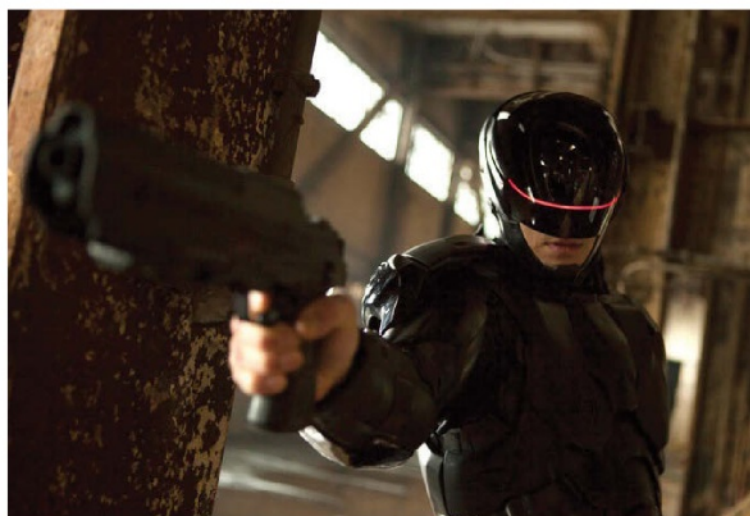
In a near-future United States, Raymond Sellars (Michael Keaton) has sold his robot peacekeepers to the



military, but can't get them approved for use on home soil. When honest cop and family man Alex Murphy (Joel Kinnaman) is blown up by a car bomb, Sellars spies an opportunity. Dr Dennett Norton (Gary Oldman) leads Murphy's development into RoboCop, but what happens to the man inside the machine?

RoboCop 2.0 starts strong. The satire remains intact, although the volume is turned down, and it's clear that Padilha is committed to exploring different territory, presenting a surprisingly sensitive look at a broken man given the opportunity to be rebuilt at a terrible price. This Murphy's consciousness is intact from the moment he's revived, aware of what he is until that becomes a problem for Sellars.

It's here that the film works best, led by a terrific performance by Oldman as the conflicted scientist giving the task of bending a human soul to his employer's purposes. In the film's stand-out scene Murphy asks Norton to show him what's



left of his own body, and we see just how total the transformation is.

However, at the film's halfway point it returns to Detroit and follows most of the story beats of the original, with less effective results. It's overly familiar and feels unrewarding after the genuinely affecting drama. The action is surprisingly lacklustre and the film simply stops rather than building to a satisfying conclusion.

The amazing cast, which includes Abbie Cornish, Michael Kenneth

Williams, Jay Baruchel and Samuel L Jackson, is an indication that there was an interesting remake here at one point. If only it had retained the confidence to really go its own way.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Dredd

Karl Urban's unstoppable cop takes on Lena Headey's tower block in this thunderingly good reboot.

BLOODSUCKING FREAKS

Grain guignol

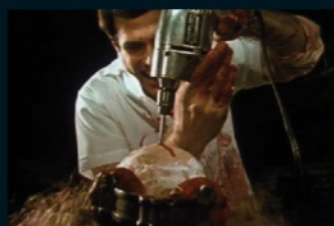
Details 18 // 91 mins // 1976 // // **Released** Out now **Director** Joel M Reed
Cast Seamus O'Brien, Viju Krem, Luis De Jesus **Distributor** 88 Films



Bloodsucking Freaks occupies that queasy place in horror history of being mostly reviled without having had any real re-evaluation, and this uncut collector's edition doesn't do much to un muddy the waters.

An off-off-Broadway torture show is using real violence on real women. Sardu (Seamus O'Brien) decides to put on the ultimate show using a ballerina, and the 80 minutes before the finale are made up of barely strung-together scenes of gore, nudity and occasionally good black comedy. It's a bit like *Theatre Of Blood* if it took more pleasure in being revolting.

A chained-up theatre critic provides the most laughs, screaming that he can't be shocked, while some images are so jaw-



droppingly bizarre that it's hard not to laugh. However, the bulk of the film is spent on lingering scenes of women being treated horrifically, during which the sense of humour either turns sour or evaporates.

Midnight movie ghouls and curio hunters will be pleased to hear that it's still nauseating in places. It's a genuinely weird mix of comedy and horror, wit and shocks, but remains a trial to get through.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★☆☆

CARRIE

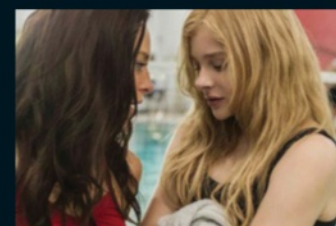
Prom distress

Details 15 // 99 mins // 2013 // // **Released** Out now **Director** Kimberly Peirce **Cast** Chloë Grace Moretz, Julianne Moore, Judy Greer, Portia Doubleday, Gabriella Wilde **Distributor** 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment



If you can appreciate the young adult sub-genre-friendly context then the first two thirds of *Carrie*, for the most part, will seem surprisingly smart and nuanced. But when the bucket drops and the big set piece kicks in, it turns this on its head by indulging its audience with a naked revenge fantasy.

In Brian De Palma's 1976 adaptation of Stephen King's debut novel, we bore witness to playground violence, unwilling to intervene as the popular kids humiliated the disengaged weirdo scrabbling around on the wet tiles. Conversely, with Kimberly Peirce's *Carrie*, we're in the character's court from the outset, and when the (not very good CGI) knives start flying and the psychic shockwaves



flying cars into gas stations, we're supposed to make our own telekinetic kill list.

This *Carrie* is an unabashed teen movie in a way that the original wasn't, and while that perhaps makes its vision appear more 'valid' as a remake – it clearly has a place and a purpose – for every two steps it takes forwards in the name of resonance, it proceeds to take another one backwards.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★☆☆

RoboCop // Bloodsucking Freaks // Carrie // The Cat Returns/Pom Poko/Princess Mononoke

FILM INFO

Details

U // PG // PG
 75 mins // 119 mins //
 134 mins
 2002 // 1994 // 1997

Creator

Hiroiyuki Morita/Isao
 Takahata/Hayao Miyazaki

Cast

Chizuru Ikewaki, Yoshihiko
 Hakamada, Aki Maeda/
 Shincho Kokontei, Makoto
 Nonomura, Yuriki Ishida/
 Yoji Matsuda, Yuriko Ishida,
 Yuko Tanaka

DISC

Format



Released

19 May/Out now/19 May

Distributor

Studiocanal



THE CAT RETURNS/POM POKO/PRINCESS MONONOKE

The Great Ghibli

UNDERSTANDING STUDIO GHIBLI

Should I watch them in English or Japanese?

Japanese is definitely the way they were meant to be viewed. However, the English versions will star-stud your experience. Anne Hathaway, for example, stars in *The Cat Returns*.

Why are there so many testicles in *Pom Poko*?

Most Ghibli films are rooted in Japanese mythology, which for some reason means a lot of phallic imagery. Inspired by tanuki folklore (a Japanese raccoon-dog known for its swinging appendage) this explains the abundance of them in *Pom Poko*.

Why are Ghibli films so long?

This could be down to a strict policy that was instated after 1984 movie *Nausicaä Of The Valley Of The Wind* was given a Hollywood makeover, much to the disappointment of Hayao Miyazaki. To prove a point, the studio sent Miramax a real samurai sword with the simple note: 'No cuts'.

The retirement of Studio Ghibli's Hayao Miyazaki

last year marked the passing of a golden age for Japanese animation; one in which the world was painted bright by a vision like no other. The studio, of course, continues on without the master's guidance, but will it ever emulate the wonder, magic and uncompromising storytelling of films such as *Spirited Away*? While fans wait to find out the answer, three classic films from Miyazaki's tenure as head honcho have been released on Blu-ray this month

Let's start with *The Cat Returns* (★★★★☆). Released in 2002, Reiko Yoshida's semi spin-off from 1995's *Whisper Of The Heart* (adapted from a manga by Miyazaki himself) tells the tale of Haru, a shy Tokyo schoolgirl whose ability to talk to felines inadvertently results in her being summoned to the Kingdom of Cats as the betrothed of the cat prince Lune.

Under the directorial eye of Hiroiyuki Morita, its animation has a slightly cruder and more realistic sense of the world and its curiosities than his then-teacher. Yet even so, compared to most of Ghibli's output it is – excuse the pun – fluffier than most: its brief 75-minute running time masking no pretence of simply being a well-paced and surrealist slice of family fun.

Slightly heavier in both running time and thematics is 1994's *Pom Poko* (★★★★☆). It's the story of a decades-long struggle by tanuki-think raccoons, but more Japanese, more magical

and, as is customary in old anime tradition, with more swinging testicles – to stop Tokyo's urban expansion from destroying their forest. Their means of doing so is novel: the tanuki can change their form, and it's by transforming into monsters and humans themselves that they hope to scare away the construction.

While written and directed by his co-collaborator Isao Takahata, Miyazaki is credited with 'planning', and it's easy to see his influence, for behind the whimsy of the occasionally slapstick tone is a stark message of ecological concern – a slaughter of nature by industrialism. Indeed, as if to encapsulate things, the animation itself fluxes between comic cartoonishness to the arresting realism of a run-over tanuki lying in a pool of its own blood. For that alone it's an entertaining and powerful film, but one that suffers from an array of characters, sub-plots and a busy rhythm that can undermine its own intentions by making its focus elusive. Still, you do have to admire their balls.

Three years after *Pom Poko*, Miyazaki himself would take full creative control to reverently build upon its ecological themes with the whimsy-free *Princess Mononoke* (★★★★★), a film that upon its release in the United States in 1997 would become Studio Ghibli's first international hit.

Essentially a fantastical period drama, it centres around Ashitaka, a youthful prince forced into exile when a skirmish with a demon boar leaves his right arm fatally diseased. Setting out to find a cure from wherever the boar came from, he comes upon an array of intriguing characters before clashing with – and ultimately falling for – the titular princess San, herself an eco-warrior who despises the humans that consume her forest's resources.

On paper it's a fairy tale, but on screen *Princess Mononoke* refuses to paint its arguments or characters in black and white. There are no pure heroes, clear-cut villains or actual answers to the plight of indigenous people and nature in the face of unchecked business interests, the death of spirituality in the name of social progress, misogyny in its many manifestations. This thematic richness is only matched by its lush, fluid and gorgeously detailed animation.

It is Miyazaki's masterpiece – but not his last. What a career. What a legacy.

Stephen Kelly

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



Spirited Away

An obvious choice, but Miyazaki's tale of a girl lost in a fantastical land really is his second masterpiece.



Season Six

Must see now!

TRUE BLOOD

A bite to remember

Details TBC // 600 mins // **Cast** Anna Paquin, Stephen Moyer, Deborah Ann Woll, Sam Trammell **Distributor** Warner Home Video



Season Six was the show's first without creator, Alan Ball, and it turned out to be the best run since Eric (Alexander Skarsgard) got amnesia in Season Three. While last year was waylaid by heavy religious themes, this season quickly retreats from the global implications of the vampire bible and hones in on Bill (Stephen Moyer)'s personal belief system instead.

Humans are declaring war on vampires – an arc that deftly returns the show's emphasis to the fanged population while shepherding our favourite characters into one place: a concentration camp for bloodsuckers. It's a smart move by new showrunner Brian Buckner, who is clearly aware that you can't give equal screen time to every member of such a huge cast.

Meanwhile, in Bon Temps, Sookie (Anna Paquin) and Jason (Ryan Kwanten) team up with their fairy grandpa Niall – a Munsters-type eccentric played with bags of southern gothic charm by Rutger Hauer. Together, they try to bring down Warlow (Rob Kazinsky), the much-talked-about big bad who fails to live up to the hype. His vendetta against Sookie gives our forgotten heroine a chance to redeem herself,

though, repairing some of the damage done by previous seasons of bad decisions and moping to Rupert Holmes' Piña Colada song.

But it was Eric who stole the best moments. We loved him when he was angry – ripping off a bloke's gonads ("I'll be back in ten minutes to make sure you have bled out"). We loved him more when he was upset – crying rivers of blood over the demise of a friend. But we loved him most when he was being Tumblr bait: appearing at a virgin's window like an albino Dracula, and reclining on a glacier while completely starkers.

Turbies can rest in peace knowing he'll be back for Season Seven, but there was a genuine feeling that anything could happen this year. Instead of expanding the biggest cast on television, a few were bumped off instead. By the closing moments, we were left hopeful that Season Seven – the last ever one – will be back to its campy best, with all the gore and social commentary that had us hooked to begin with.

Jodie Tyley
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Sleepy Hollow
Ichabod Crane is resurrected, with the Headless Horseman on the rampage.



Season One

Must see now!

ORPHAN BLACK

I am she and she is me

Details 15 // 600 mins // **Cast** Tatiana Maslany, Jordan Gavaris, Maria Doyle Kennedy, Kevin Hanchard **Distributor** 2Entertain



Orphan Black was one of the real out-of-nowhere surprises of last year – a whip-smart, witty and inventive sci-fi series with a stunning performance at its centre.

Tatiana Maslany (*Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed*) plays Sarah, a street urchin turned con artist who's looking to get back in her young daughter's life. When she witnesses the suicide of a woman who looks exactly like her, she soon discovers that she's not quite one of a kind. In fact, there are several women who look exactly like her, and at least one of them is working for a shady organisation that is trying to kill her.

For all the conspiracy theory plotting and shady organisations, the real reason for *Orphan Black*'s huge appeal is the success of its high concept. Maslany excels as each of the characters (even if we have to point out that the English accents on the show aren't exactly a high point), making each one so convincing that you will forget it's the same actor. There's fiery series lead

Sarah, brittle suburban soccer mum Alison, warm-hearted academic Cosima and psychotic assassin Helena, and that's just for starters.

The plot itself comes second, as Sarah uncovers two warring organisations, the Proletheans and the Neolutionists, both with an interest in the clones. The growing paranoia gives Maslany the opportunity to stretch the already unstable Alison to breaking point, with hilarious results, and give Cosima's relationship with her girlfriend Delphine (Évelyne Brochu) real depth.

Maslany is so strong that the supporting cast has to fight to stand out. Maria Doyle Kennedy grounds the series as Sarah's foster mother Mrs S, Jordan Gavaris is excellent as Sarah's artist/rent-boy foster-brother Felix, and Matt Frewer is dependably creepy as a Neolutionist scientist, but characters such as shady monitor Paul (Dylan Bruce) fade into the background.

However, while the supporting characters and plotting may drift into the generic, there's enough energy to keep it gripping, while Maslany's superb performances make it a must-see.

Jonathan Hatfull
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Misfits
At its best, *Misfits* rivals *Orphan Black*'s mix of berserk twists and unforgettable characters.



True Blood // Orphan Black // Jago And Litefoot // Doctor Who: The Evil One // Doctor Who: War to End All Wars / Moonflesh



Season Seven

JAGO AND LITEFOOT The Grey Team

Details 311 mins // 2014 // CD, MP3 // **Released** Out now **Director** Lisa Bowerman **Sound Design** Howard Carter **Music** Howard Carter **Cast** Christopher Benjamin, Trevor Baxter, Lisa Bowerman, Conrad Asquith, Louise Jameson, Philip Pope **Distributor** Big Finish

At the end of Series Six, gentlemen paranormal investigators Jago and Litefoot were on the run, wanted by the government for a crime they didn't commit. 'The Monstrous Menagerie' picks up the story with our intrepid chums "skulking about in back alleys like a couple of vagabonds," but thanks to their old friend the Doctor they are soon set up in digs at 221b Baker Street and introduced to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, fresh from killing off his Great Detective.

Doyle's tetchy defensiveness when asked about Sherlock's return is a fun running gag, giving the story its preposterously pat, *Bill & Ted*-esque climax where he promises to write *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* in order to retrospectively contrive an escape from certain death. More introspective and psychological, 'The Night Of 1000 Stars' welcomes back Leela in pursuit of a ravenous beast called Remorse, a poetic metaphor made flesh. Jago, pining for the stage, introduces each

character's disclosures as if they were theatrical turns, which is the sort of offbeat, fanciful device that this series revels in and thrives on.

The shadow of Sherlock falls again on 'Murder At Moorsey Manor', a country-house mystery with shades of Edgar Allan Poe among the Agatha Christie tropes, while final story 'The Wax Princess' concerns Jack the Ripper's attempt to become king of England by marrying a waxwork of Queen Victoria's niece, animated by body parts harvested during his murders – again, the kind of bizarre grotesquery that works so well against Jago and Litefoot's reassuringly unflappable pragmatism.

Although embracing ridiculous plots, rushed conclusions and clunky dialogue describing visual action, *Jago & Litefoot* remains one of the best things about modern *Doctor Who* – arguably better than the show itself – for the effortless charm, charisma and chemistry of Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter. Now in or near their 80s, their voices retain the power, humour and finesse of the characters we first encountered in 'The Talons Of Weng-Chiang' nearly 40 years ago.

Chris Chantler
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Scarifiers
A series of supernatural audio mysteries set in the Thirties featuring a slew of veteran thespans.

DOCTOR WHO: THE EVIL ONE



"You will obey...me"

Details 60 mins // CD, MP3 // **Released** Out now **Director** Nicholas Briggs **Writer** Nicholas Briggs **Sound Design** Jamie Robertson **Music** Jamie Robertson **Cast** Tom Baker, Louise Jameson, Geoffrey Beevers **Distributor** Big Finish



The Master is at it again. Hiding behind an impenetrable disguise (Inspector Efendi, the Turkish word for 'master'), he's formed an alliance with telepathic alien metallic preying mantises and convinced Leela that she's an assassin whose only purpose in life is to kill the Doctor. Leela's father was killed off in the first minute of her first story and never mentioned again, and the Master exploits her guilt to turn her into the Evil One.

Old *Who* never had that kind of emotional literacy, and Louise Jameson gets the chance to do the big acting and angsty character stuff that she never had on the telly.

It's nice that Leela has become a bit more three-dimensional, and



it's nice to hear the Doctor being unusually human and fatherly towards her, but the real fun is to be had in listening to the Master and the Doctor engaging in one-dimensional heroic and villainous banter. Obviously, Tom Baker isn't as young as he used to be, but hearing him back in the role of the Fourth Doctor should put a smile on any Whovian's face.

Andrew Rillstone
VERDICT ★★★★★

DOCTOR WHO: Return of the Peters WAR TO END ALL WARS / MOONFLESH

Details 60/120 mins // CD, MP3 // **Released** Out now **Directors** Lisa Bowerman / Ken Bentley **Writers** Simon Guerrier / Mark Morris **Sound Design** Simon Robinson / Andy Hardwick **Music** Simon Robinson / Andy Hardwick **Cast** Peter Purves / Peter Davison **Distributor** Big Finish



Old people may still think of Peter Purves as a *Blue Peter* presenter, while very old people will remember him as Steven Taylor, *Doctor Who*'s second male companion. But now it's Steven who's very old, having left the Doctor and become king of an alien planet.

In 'War To End War' (★★★★★), Steven describes the time he got drafted into an alien trench war. Purves sounds just like he did in the Sixties; his impression of William Hartnell is a joy. But no First Doctor story was ever remotely like this.

'Moonflesh' (★★★★★), on the other hand, is a faithful recreation



of a Fifth Doctor romp. A dotty Edwardian has filled the grounds of his stately pile with wild animals to be hunted. His Indian manservant has a mysterious artefact, which starts glowing and possessing the wild animals. Before long, more glowing meteors are falling from the sky. You know the drill.

Not classics by any means, but Big Finish continues to do sterling work evoking classic-era *Who*.

Andrew Rillstone





METAL GEAR SOLID V: GROUND ZEROES

SciFiNow
Must
play now!

The start of something wonderful

Format Multi // **Age rating** 18 // **Publisher** Konami // **Developer** Kojima Productions // **Players** 1 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £29.99 // **Downloadable** No



Translating the Hollywood

experience to the digital realm of videogames has proved to be a difficult task. Plenty

of developers have tried – most have failed. *Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes*, however, is a cinematic tour de force, with developer Kojima Productions taking the classic stealth action series and reinventing it for a new generation of consoles and gamers. *Ground Zeroes*' strength is its accessibility, catering to both hardcore stealth fanatics – where being spotted is synonymous with restarting a checkpoint – and those who aren't averse to spilling blood.

In fact, *Ground Zeroes* is designed with multiple playthroughs in mind. It actively encourages you to guide returning character Big Boss through the same Cuban island time and time again – experimenting with different approaches through an open-ended prison camp each time. It's a little bit

Groundhog Day, and the game expects you to be okay with that. *Ground Zeroes* only features one main mission – which you'll blast through in under two hours – and then there's a handful of side-quests that will only entertain for a short while longer.

It's disappointing, because the gameplay mechanics are sublime, and *Ground Zeroes* is a reinvention of the classic *Metal Gear* gameplay in the best possible way. Sneaking feels powerful, and going on the offensive is finally fun – we just wish there was more of it, which is just as well, because *Ground Zeroes* is a taster for the bigger *MGS: Phantom Pain*, coming in 2015.

All things considered, if you can get over the gameplay-to-length ratio problems, *Ground Zeroes* feels like an essential purchase, especially on next-gen systems. It's without a doubt one of the best-looking games available today, showcasing the potential of the medium when a developer has fantastic vision for cinematography and an incredible pedigree in game design. At the very least, you'll want to get a taste of what a talent like Kiefer Sutherland can bring to such a gritty role – now we're left desperately waiting until 2015 to get more of it.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Last Of Us
If you're interested in another movie-like experience, *The Last Of Us* is still the king of the pack.



SciFiNow
Must
play now!

DARK SOULS II

Not for the faint-hearted

Format Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 // **Age rating** 15 // **Publisher** Namco Bandai // **Developer** From Software // **Players** 1 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £39.99 // **Downloadable** No



All things

considered, the success of *Dark Souls* simply defies logic. Developer From Software tossed players into an

unrelenting gauntlet designed to test skill and patience in equal measure, finding masochistic joy in offering minimal guidance along the way. Truth be told, you were probably more likely to see Batman swoop into an issue of *Captain America* than ever reach the end credits. But players persevered, and found something quite rare in today's casual market: a dungeon crawler steeped in fantasy mythology that was quite unlike anything else.

A sequel wasn't really required as much as demanded, and thankfully *Dark Souls II* delivers every bit the follow-up that we could have hoped for. It's simultaneously overwhelming in scope and unrelentingly brutal in difficulty; it certainly isn't for the faint of heart. As with the original, *Dark Souls II* rewards the cautious and punishes the impatient – those who are able to get their heads around the learning curve will find one of the most engaging and fulfilling releases of the year.

Punishment is still central to the *Dark Souls* experience – even the lowliest spooky skeleton equipped with a stick can send a skilled player hurtling back to the nearest bonfire, sans souls and pride. From Software

hasn't reduced the difficulty level, but the developer has (thankfully) made things a little more accessible. For one, *Dark Souls II* actually explains some of its core mechanics this time. Moreover, on occasion it might even point you in the right direction when you're lost in the woods. It has taken away some of the mastery, which you might complain about, but deep down you know this will save you a visit to Wikipedia at 2am when you're left sobbing uncontrollably in the wake of a particularly difficult boss encounter.

Dark Souls II isn't a cruel game, but it never wastes an opportunity to take you by surprise and kick you in the arse. Every step should be taken tentatively, shield raised and hands steady to face whatever challenges are around the next corner. It isn't exactly a surprise, but it's damn good at what it does nonetheless. If you're after a lengthy game that takes away and rewards in equal measure, put your best game face on and prepare for the long haul. It's a brutally difficult test of character, but if you dare face it, you'll find one of the best games of the year waiting for you.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Demons Souls
It's harder and buggier than the *Dark Souls* series, and only available on PS3. Fun though.

Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes // Dark Souls II // Shadowrun: Dragonfall // Diablo 3: Reaper Of Souls



Sci-Fi Now
Must play now!

SHADOWRUN: DRAGONFALL

It's all about might and magic

Format PC, Mac // **Age rating** 12 // **Publisher** Harebrained Schemes // **Developer** Harebrained Schemes // **Players** 1 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £19.99 // **Downloadable** Yes



Once, games weren't supported by a constant slew of post-launch DLC. Instead, they were given notable add-ons that looked to expand and iterate on an original experience, increasing a title's shelf life by months instead of a couple of afternoons. That's the treatment 2013's Kickstarter-darling *Shadowrun Returns* receives as its first expansion – *Dragonfall* – finally arrives, offering a vibrant approach to storytelling, engaging characters and a fresh approach to gameplay that make it feel more like a fully fledged sequel than anything else.

Moving the action from Seattle to the magic-drenched streets of Berlin, *Shadowrun: Dragonfall* succeeds in every area that its predecessor failed. Thankfully, it still offers an accessible gateway into the fiction of *Shadowrun*, whether you're familiar with its legacy or are new to the universe. It does the franchise a disservice to describe it as a cyberpunk take on *Dungeons & Dragons*, but it works fairly successfully as an elevator pitch. Magic has re-emerged in the 21st Century; shotgun-wielding elves slice computer mainframes for a living, as orc mages and dwarf hackers rise up against evil

corporations run by dragons. This isn't your typical take on fantasy, and that lends *Shadowrun* an ever-inviting edge.

Thankfully, that edge extends to *Dragonfall*'s sharp, isometric role-playing gameplay and turn-based combat. One of the biggest changes is the focus on building a crew of shadowrunners. Taking its cue from BioWare's *Mass Effect* games, it's more satisfying to tackle objectives with a team of eccentric characters that you've become friends with and helped guide over the course of a couple of hours.

While the combat remains largely unchanged, the linearity of the original has been replaced. Beyond your hideout, you'll find a neighbourhood bustling with vibrant characters and side-quests to explore. Interestingly, most of the missions can be tackled in any order, giving you free rein to approach the game however you see fit.

Dragonfall is everything *Shadowrun Returns* should have been. Sadly, the original is a required purchase if you want to enjoy this expansion, but don't let that put you off. *Dragonfall* isn't a revolution, but it is an incredibly entertaining and surprisingly deep RPG experience that we won't soon forget.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Shadowrun Returns
Dragonfall might be better than its predecessor, but you need *Returns* to get it working. You should give it a spin!

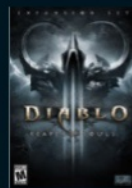


Sci-Fi Now
Must play now!

DIABLO 3: REAPER OF SOULS

Into the lungs of hell

Format PC // **Age rating** 16 // **Publisher** Blizzard Entertainment // **Developer** Blizzard Entertainment // **Players** 1-4 // **Released** Out now // **Price** £29.99 // **Downloadable** Yes



It's been a long two years for those of us with a habit of breaking mouses through extensive clicking. *Reaper Of Souls* is what *Diablo*

3 should have been: challenging, rewarding and obsessive in its attempts to keep us chasing orange items until the early hours. Blizzard has finally pulled the corpse of the online auction house off of *Diablo 3*, refined the loot system and generally improved the game in every way.

Diablo 3 was a fun but misguided attempt to revive the long-dormant franchise. Thankfully, *Reaper Of Souls* does everything right from the outset. It's bigger and better in every sense – each map is immediately impressive, boasting an increase in size without sacrificing detail or content. It feels like events and dungeons are waiting to be found at every click, and the variation is impressive too, certainly helping to break up *Diablo*'s sometimes monotonous gameplay cycle. This is supported by a simply wonderful score, not to mention beautiful art direction. Blizzard has

always been adept at developing incredible-looking worlds, but *Diablo*'s first expansion pack feels like yet another step forward for the studio.

Thanks to the 2.0.1 patch released last month, the new Loot 2.0 itemisation system and other core changes have already made the *Diablo* experience feel energised again – it no longer feels like its dragging its heels trying to keep you from logging. Instead, it's more rewarding the longer you play. *Reaper Of Souls* simply enhances this patch, offering a variety of content, a new class and an Adventure mode that offers an alternative and thrilling way to tackle the campaign. Overall, the expansion thrives off of the patch's essential tweaks, ensuring that *Diablo 3* is better than it has ever been.

Fundamentally, *Reaper Of Souls* is still *Diablo*. If you aren't interested in throwing yourself through an unrelenting gauntlet of enemies for hours on end then this isn't going to win you over. If, on the other hand, you like the idea of *Diablo* but were put off by *3*'s execution, then step into the lungs of hell – you won't find a better dungeon crawler this year.

Josh West
VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Diablo 2
It's super-old now, but if you can look past the aged graphics you will find an incredible game.



SciFiNow Vault

TOYS // COLLECTABLES // COOL STUFF

1 Pop! Heroes Game Of Thrones

We've fallen in love with these Pop figurines that capture the likeness of the *Game Of Thrones* cast with adorable simplicity – even King Joffrey would melt your heart with his saucer eyes. Each toy is armed with a few props that complete the look of the character, whether it's a crossbow or sword, and Drogon and Ghost have earned full-sized figures all of their own.

hboshopeu.com // £7.99 each

BEST FOR: QUIRKY COLLECTORS

2 Gremlin Spider

Remember the moment that Mohawk, leader of the new batch, downed a bottle of spider serum and transformed into a hideous Gremlin/arachnid hybrid? This action figure will jog your memory, with immense detail, a hinged jaw and eight massive spider legs that can be posed however you like. Be warned: this is no house spider. Mohawk stands at ten inches tall and 15 inches wide, so he'll need a shelf all to himself, but he does come with a support stand for balance.

Toyhq.co.uk // £44.99

BEST FOR: NEW BATCH BUFFS

3 Captain America – SDCC Exclusive

These days, Cap's outfit is much less conspicuous, but this First Avenger action figure transports us back in time to the 'Star Spangled Man' USO tour. The man behind the mask bears a genuine likeness to actor Chris Evans, and his muscle-bound bod is familiar too. He's very flexible, with over 30 points of articulation, and there are seven interchangeable gloved palms for almost every scenario, from holding his trademark shield to clenching a fist. Completely realistic and battle-ready.

Toyhq.co.uk // £90

BEST FOR: PATRIOTS

4 The Joker Mime

This figure's resemblance to Jack Nicholson's Joker is so realistic, it's as if he's been zapped with a shrink ray. Peer closely, and you can see wrinkled skin, blood vessels on his glassy eyes and every wisp of hair of green hair that looks as if it's been combed into submission. His iconic costume is just as detailed, and he comes with a choice of feathers, a top hat and interchangeable hands. It's such a labour of love, and a must-have for fans of the classic Tim Burton *Batman*.

Toyhq.co.uk // £129.99

BEST FOR: PERFECTIONISTS

4

3

5

5 RoboCop 8-Bit

The future of law enforcement gets an 8-bit makeover in this tribute to the classic 1989 *RoboCop* videogame. He arrives in a vintage-themed, collector-friendly box with information about the character printed on the panel. The shiny blueish purple paint job separates this figure from others on the shelves, and it comes with a spring-loaded holster and Auto-9 Pistol.

Part cop, part machine, all toy.

Toyhq.co.uk // £17.99

BEST FOR: RETRO GAMERS

Top 5 Robot-themed Tees

Get yours from Zazzle.co.uk

Robot Evolution of man into robot



We've seen Sheldon wear a tee just like this on *The Big Bang Theory*, so it automatically

gets a thumbs-up. **£19.95**

Da Vinci Vitruvian Robot



Celebrate the return of Fox's *Da Vinci's Demons* with this quirky robotic twist on a classic. The colours can be

customised, too. **£18.50**

Comrades of steel



If someone asks you to explain the design, it can be summed up as retro-futurist Soviet propaganda

featuring giant communist robots. Duh. **£24.70**

Mecha girl shirt



This cute tee shows a female engineer admiring her handy work – a giant mecha robot. **£20.75**

Steampunk robot



For those who prefer oversized robots imagined by HG Wells rather than Guillermo del Toro. **£19.50**



BETRAYAL AT HOUSE ON THE HILL

Publisher: Avalon Hill // Players: 3-5 // RRP: £39.99

Avalon Hill's classic board game has just been reprinted, making this the perfect opportunity to revisit its macabre delights.

Play revolves around two distinct phases: 'Exploration' and 'Haunt'. Players choose from a motley selection of investigators and begin exploring the creaky old house, which consists of three floors: ground, upper and basement. Players can move as far as their movement allows, but must stop upon entering a new room. Each new room is created by drawing from a pile of unused floor cards, meaning that each game will feature a different house layout. While players can use stairs to pass between the upper and ground floors, specific rooms must be found in order for the player to reach the basement.

As new rooms are discovered, Event, Item and Omen cards are revealed, which further impact on play. Event cards typically require you to roll against specific character skills, while items grant you useful equipment. Omen cards can also give you bonuses, but come with an additional risk: every time an Omen card is drawn, six dice are rolled. If you roll less than the number of drawn Omen cards then the 'Haunt' phase begins.

Once the 'Haunt' phase is activated, the game changes radically. One player is now revealed as the traitor, and is given a book with specific victory conditions in it. The other players receive an additional book with their own quest objectives, after which it becomes a desperate race to the finish to complete the required tasks. Play continues as before, the key difference being that the players and

1 STATS

Your character card has four keys stats: Might, Speed, Knowledge and Sanity. You'll regularly need to make checks against them.

4 CARDS

There are three card types: Items, Events and Omens. Omens have rewards, and make triggering haunts likelier.

2 NEW ROOMS

When you explore a new room you draw from here. The floors have to match, so draw again if the top tile isn't suitable.

3 LAYOUTS

The playing area consists of different tiles that slot together to form the mansion. The layouts will change every time you play.

6 DICE

You'll roll dice at numerous points, from combat to performing feats. They are also used to trigger haunts.

5 BOOKS

There are three books included. One features the main rules; the others contain the rules for the traitors and players.



traitor have the options to attack each other, which makes the end scenarios even trickier to complete.

The beauty of *Betrayal* is the sheer amount of variety that has been packed into it. While the core mechanics are relatively simple, there's a general feeling of unease during play, as you never know how a game is going to end. There are 50 different scenarios, with many based on cheesy Eighties horror films, and the sheer breadth of what's on offer is quite overwhelming – one minute you're protecting a NPC, and the next you're trying to escape the house before it gets sucked into a black hole. *Betrayal* offers tremendous replay value, particularly when placed next to other similar adventures, such as *Mansions Of Madness*. In fact, the only real problems with this new version of *Betrayal* is that the components don't feel as nice as before, giving it a cheapness that takes the sheen off an otherwise wonderfully entertaining game.

BEST FOR: EIGHTIES MOVIE BUFFS

7 CHARACTERS

The character models are decent, but not spectacular – far below the Fantasy Flight Games models, for example.

8 TOKENS

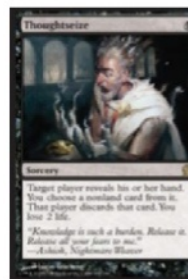
There are a number of different tokens used in *Betrayal*, ranging from showing monsters and key adversaries to items and status conditions.

TOP FIVE

MAGIC: THE GATHERING THEROS



1. STORMBREATH DRAGON £20



2. THOUGHTSEIZE £18



3. ELSPETH, SUN'S CHAMPION £16



4. THASSA, GOD OF THE SEA £15



5. XENAGOS, THE REVELER £12

Mage Wars

Publisher: Arcane Wonders // **Players:** 2 // **RRP:** £49.99

Mage Wars is one of the most innovative card games we've played for some time. It's also a hell of a lot of fun, delivering a chaotic battle between rival spellcasters that feels refreshingly new.

Like many two-player card games, the first thing you do is construct a deck to play with. Each card has a spell cost, and each wizard (of which there are four) has a set amount of points that they can spend. The beauty here, though, is that once constructed, your deck is placed in a spell book, allowing

you instant access to all your powerful spells. It's a great idea, but your opponent has the same advantage, which makes for some very interesting plays.

Duels are played on a game board, and on each turn you can cast and summon cards (if you have enough mana) to help you. This in turn creates additional strategy as you're constantly trying to outcast and outmanoeuvre your opponent. The end result is an extremely

well-balanced game of cat and mouse that will only improve as new wizards and spells get released in additional expansion packs. It takes a while to understand due to a few fiddly rules, but the payoff is certainly worth it.

BEST FOR: STRATEGY LOVERS

DC Comics Deck-Building Game: Heroes Unite

Publisher: Cryptozoic // **Players:** 2-5 // **RRP:** £29.99

Many of DC's most popular heroes have appeared in Cryptozoic's first deck-building game. As a result, the likes of Shazam!, Booster Gold and Black Canary take centre stage in this new expansion that doubles as a standalone game.

It's a risky proposition for those not well-versed in DC lore, but it works, with each hero having unique abilities that integrate well with the original core set. The new super-villains you must defeat are an equally

exotic bunch, ranging from Arkillo and Trigon to Vandal Savage and Helspont, and they're far tougher than those found in the original game.

Although there aren't any new core mechanics, Cryptozoic has included two standalone variants. Super Hero Synergy ensures only you can buy the hero version of your character, while Super-Villain Hunt allows you to attack and steal Super-Villains found in your opponent's discard piles.

Otherwise, it's business as usual, with you taking it in turns to buy affordable cards until you have enough power to defeat the random selection of available super-villains.

It's all rounded off with some truly spectacular art. We particularly like how it's cross-compatible with Cryptozoic's recent *Street Fighter* game, meaning you can now find out who'd win in a scrap between Ryu and Mongul.

BEST FOR: DC FANS

Expansion Of The Month DESCENT: SHADOW OF NEREKHAL

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games // **Players:** 2-4 // **RRP:** £49.99



Fantasy Flight Games' reimagining of *Descent* goes from strength to strength. *Shadow Of Nerekhall* is another giant expansion that boasts

detailed character models, a huge number of new locations and four new classes: Bard, Conjurer, Shadow Walker and Skirmisher.

In terms of parties out of the box it's probably the most balanced yet, providing a good mix of healers and tanks that give you a fighting chance against the many powerful monsters you'll encounter. The 19 available quests form the backbone of an excellent campaign with plenty of twists and turns and some truly epic battles. Add in new Overlord cards, major rule changes on influence and corruption, and *Shadow Of Nerekhall* easily justifies its high price tag.

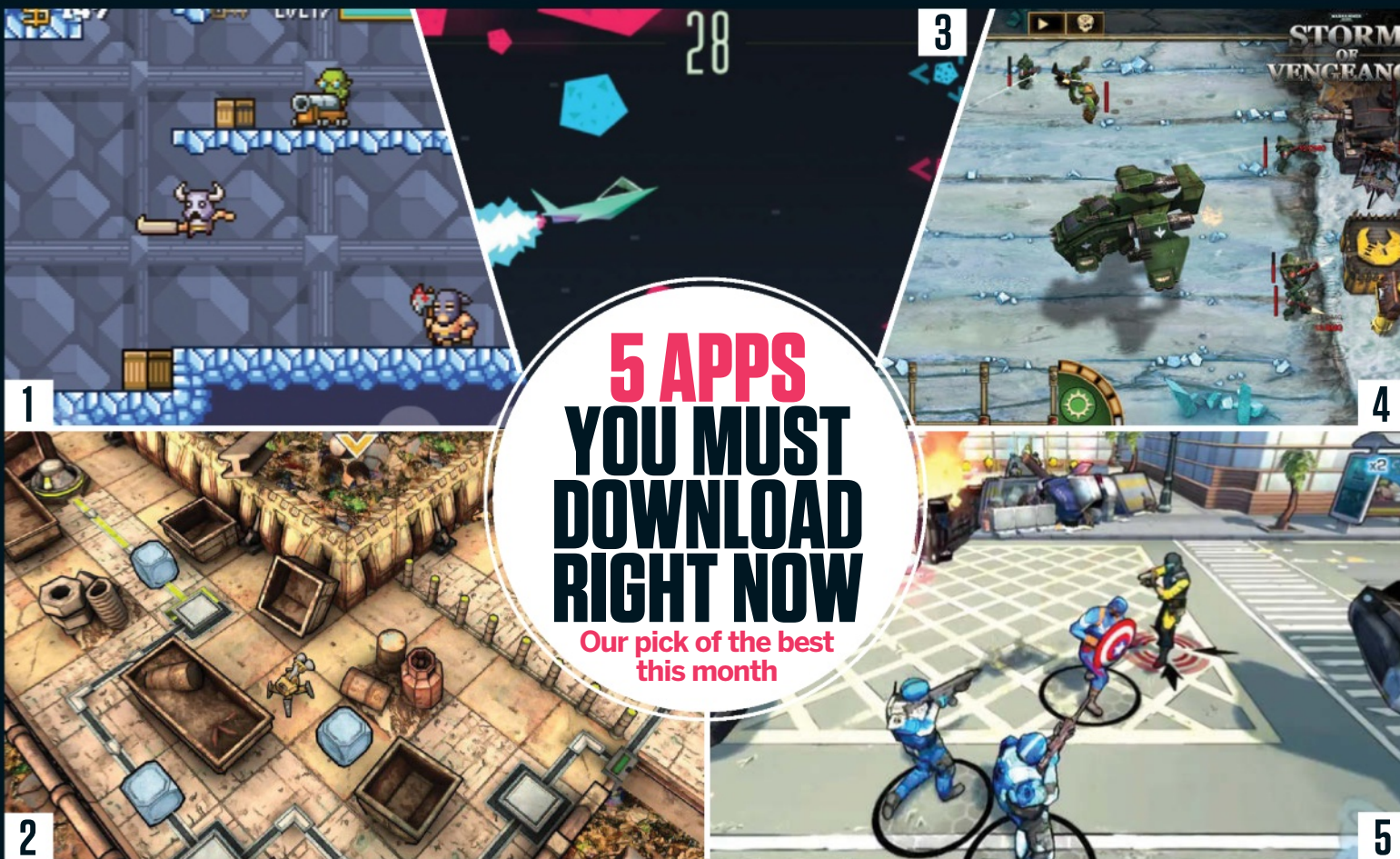
Do You Remember?

MAGIC: THE GATHERING TIME SPIRAL

Magic's past and future combined



The *Time Spiral* block remains one of the most interesting additions to *Wizards Of The Coast's* popular card game. First released in 2006, *Time Spiral* focused on classic cards from *Magic's* past and included not only classic creatures like Slivers, Merfolk and Mavu, but also long-forgotten mechanics such as 'Flanking' and 'Storm'. It also marked a return to the card design that had been abandoned three years previously. *Time Spiral* was followed by *Planar Chaos*, which featured 'Timeshifted' cards that were alternate versions of classic cards. The set was finished off in 2007 with the controversial *Future Sight*, which not only hinted at powerful cards like Planeswalkers, but also featured brand new card layouts, which have never been used since.



5 APPS YOU MUST DOWNLOAD RIGHT NOW

Our pick of the best
this month

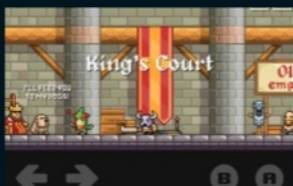
DEVIOUS DUNGEON

PRICE: £0.69/\$0.99
FOR: IOS



1 For those who miss the BBC's *Merlin*, this action platforming game will transport you back to those nights spent in Camelot. You play as a knight (who wears considerably more armour than Arthur's knights did), and must venture into the dungeons and defeat the threat to become a champion. It's a traditional tale told in a conventional way, with baddies that leave coins behind when they're vanquished and visuals rendered in 16-bit graphics.

BEST FOR: DEFENDING THE REALM



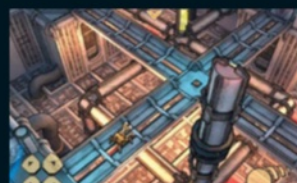
CLARC

PRICE: £2.49/\$3.99
FOR: IOS / ANDROID



2 Puzzlers will love figuring out this head-scratcher of an adventure starring drunk robots. There's a well-crafted story about Wall-E-like janitor Clarc, who encounters partying androids and intoxicated super-computers, and falls in love with attractive nuclear missiles while saving his friends from the spaceship M.O.T.H.E.R. But most of all, we adored the graphic novel-style art and superb soundtrack that accompanies the 100-plus puzzles.

BEST FOR: PUZZLE HEADS



LIGHTSPEED HERO

PRICE: FREE
FOR: IOS / ANDROID



3 There aren't many better ways to while away the hours than zipping through space dodging asteroids. This arcade game couldn't be easier to play – tap to boost your ship upwards and stop so it moves downwards. The ship will carry on forwards regardless, so it's possible to play one-handed, and there are no in-app purchases; just straightforward gameplay. The goal is to last as long as possible, climbing the leaderboard the further you get without crashing.

BEST FOR: ARCADE ADDICTS



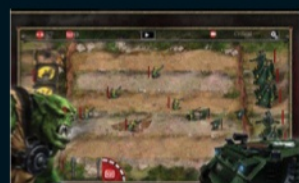
WARHAMMER 40,000: STORM OF VENGEANCE

PRICE: £2.99/\$4.99
FOR: IOS / ANDROID



4 This is a must-have for fans of Games Workshop's tabletop game, since it features two of its best-loved characters: Belial and Ghazghkull Thraka. It's set on the planet of Piscina IV, and you can choose to defend it with 100 Dark Angel Space Marines, or switch sides to the invading Ork Waaagh! army. Both factions come with their own 50-plus mission campaign, and gameplay is brought to life with an exclusive soundtrack.

BEST FOR: STRATEGISTS



CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE WINTER SOLDIER – THE OFFICIAL GAME

PRICE: £1.99/\$2.99
FOR: IOS / ANDROID



5 This original story, co-written by Christos Gage, is like a comic-book come to life, realised in bright colours and with visual sound effects like SMASH and KA-BOOM! The only niggle is the portrait orientation that forces you to play with a top-down perspective, which proves restrictive as you lead your strike team through the streets.

BEST FOR: COMIC-BOOK FANS

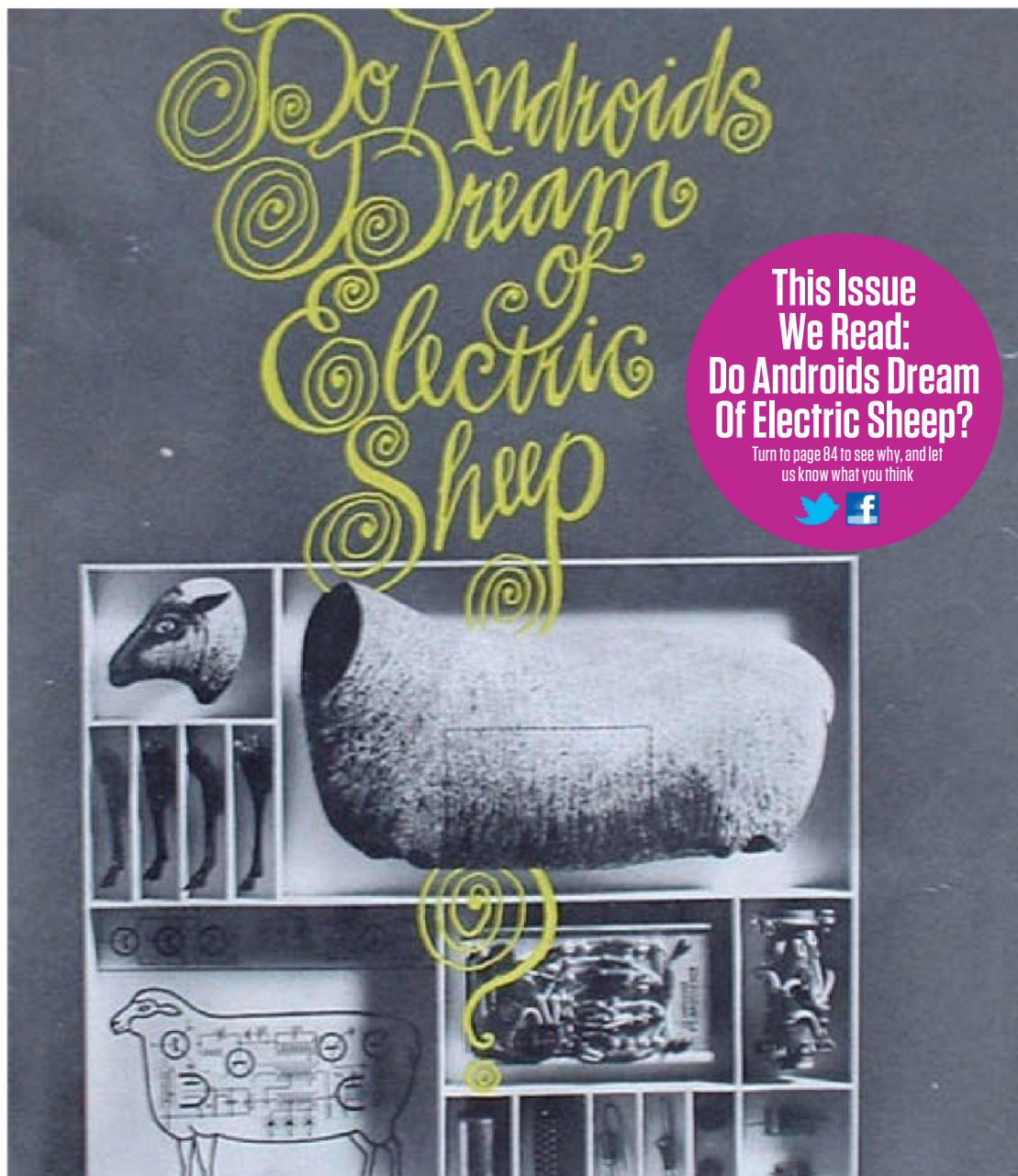


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Your community for
reading and celebrating
fantastic fiction



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This Issue We Read: Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?

Turn to page 84 to see why, and let
us know what you think



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Your Opinions

Tell us what you've been reading on Facebook or Twitter, and we'll print it

Your Decision

Let us know what you want to see. This is your section, so tell us what you think

Your Reviews

Write a review of the last book you read, and it could appear on scifinow.co.uk. Submit your review as a 300-word text file to scifinow@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Next We'll Be Reading: Beowulf



1 Pick up *Beowulf*, the Old English epic that has inspired many imitators and endured through time in the form of numerous translations.

2 Follow SciFiNow on Twitter. Read and share your thoughts with the hashtag #BookClub; they might make it into the magazine!

3 You can contribute to the Book Club discussions as much or as little as you like; the most important thing is that you have fun.

4 Pick up issue 94 of SciFiNow to check out what we thought and learn about the history of the book and its author with our Essential Read.

WORDS
MATTHEW
HANDRAHAN

ESSENTIAL READ: DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?

IN PHILIP K DICK'S CLASSIC NOVEL, THE SHEEP ARE EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT AS THE ANDROIDS...



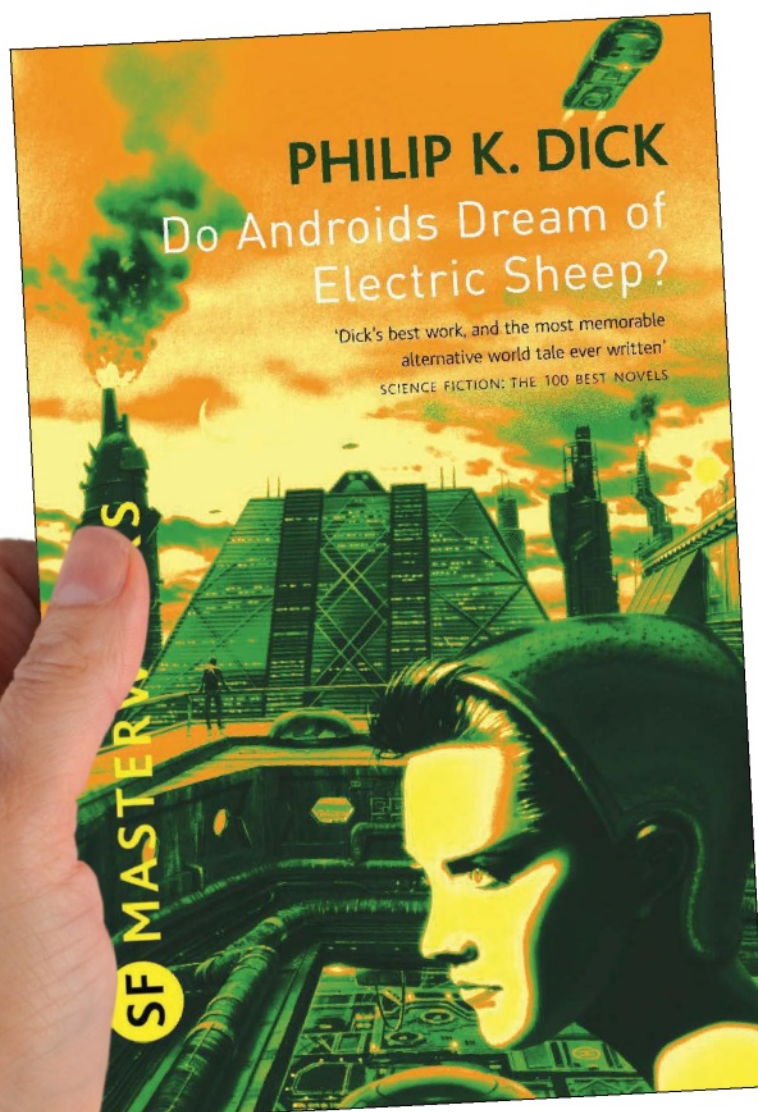
Success did not come easily to Philip K Dick, and death took him on the cusp of his greatest breakthrough.

In February 1982, he was one of the most prominent figures in the science fiction ghetto; respected and well paid, but basically ignored by the wider culture of letters.

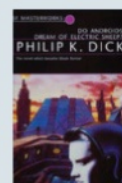
One month later he would be dead, his body disconnected from life-support after a series of strokes destroyed his brain. In June of the same year, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* was released to an astounded world, and suddenly the name 'Philip K Dick' was everywhere. Today, he is regarded as nothing less than the most important science fiction writer of the late 20th Century – and he would never have suspected a thing.

From the moment Hollywood began circling *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* – his 37th novel in an astonishingly fertile 16 years – Dick was on his guard, and the first attempt at a script confirmed his worst suspicions. Hampton Fancher, a seasoned TV writer with little experience in film, had taken the fruits of Dick's creative labour and polished it to a high shine – so thoroughly that all of its nuance and ambiguity had disappeared into a chase movie about a bounty hunter and a robot. Dick hated it, and made no secret of his ire.

"It was the worst script. It was," he said in an interview on the radio show *Hour 25* in



SYNOPSIS



In 1992, humanity is paying the price for decades of avarice and aggression. Earth has been irreparably scorched by nuclear war, its flora wilted and fauna obliterated. The remaining population is encouraged to abandon its shattered homeworld for off-world colonies. Those that do are offered an 'andy' – a robotic servant – as an incentive.

Andys may not be alive in the strict sense, but they have enough intelligence to recognise a raw deal. Escape attempts are not uncommon, and those that make it back to Earth are tracked, pursued and 'retired' by bounty hunters. That's Rick Deckard's job, but the task used to be simpler; the latest models are more impressive than their ancestors in every respect, to the point where even the Voight-Kampff test has started to seem inadequate. Pulling the trigger weighs heavily on Deckard's conscience, but the money is too good to refuse; that new goat won't pay for itself.

1977. "I'll tell you how bad it was. You could have stopped the first person on the street and asked him to write a script, and he could have done a better job."

From that moment on, Dick was terrified of what indignities his work would be made to suffer. He declined invitations to be wined and dined, and artfully dodged the opportunity to meet the director, cast and crew; in his mind, which had a proven tendency towards the paranoid, the damage had already been done. He daydreamed of furious confrontations with Ridley Scott and Harrison Ford, of being carried off the set in a screaming rage as they set about destroying his vision. "One is always haunted by the spectre of F Scott Fitzgerald," he confided to *The Twilight Zone Magazine* in what would be his last ever interview, "who goes [to Hollywood] and they just grind him up, like in a garbage disposal."

Eventually, the sheer brilliance of the work being done would penetrate the bubble of angst by which Dick was so often surrounded. He saw David Peoples' brilliant revision of Fancher's script – "It was simply sensational. It taught me things about writing that I didn't know" – and caught a glimpse of the remarkable images created by Douglas Trumbull's groundbreaking effects and Ridley Scott's peerless knack for atmosphere and tone – "I recognised it immediately. It was my own interior world. They caught it perfectly." He would not live to see *Blade Runner* in all of its glory, but as he sat down with *The Twilight Zone Magazine* that one last time, he was finally excited about the direction of the project and what it might mean for his standing in the world. It was a hopeful end to a troubled life.

Not doubt Dick would have been just as protective about a great many of his other novels, of course. Thanks to *Blade Runner*, *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* may well be the most famous work



in Dick's bibliography, but it certainly isn't the best. *Ubik*, *A Scanner Darkly*, *The Man In The High Castle*; there are many books that, in terms of sheer craft and execution, are easily its superior, but Dick felt the themes at the core of its story in the marrow of his bones. *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* wasn't just about a bounty hunter chasing a robot, and it wasn't just about the increasingly blurred line between man and machine either – at least not in the traditional definition of the word 'machine'.

For clarity, you need only look to Dick's speech at the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention in 1972, where he was the guest of honour. He was at a low point both personally and professionally, and as a socially and politically conscious human being at a time when America seemed to be on the verge of self-immolation. More than two years had passed without writing a single word – unprecedented in the 22 years he had been taking paid work – but he suddenly felt the burning urge to gather up every thought that had been circling his brain and let the world know what he really thought. Dick had accepted the possibility that the desire to write might never return,

but he knew he could take to the stage and say his piece. Three months of rigorous work later, and the speech was finished. It was called, "The Android And The Human."

With every passing month, Dick argued, humans are installing and embedding machines, computers and artificial constructs directly into their environment. "All this is in fact beginning more and more to possess what the earnest psychologists fear the primitive sees in his environment: animation. In a very real sense our environment is becoming alive, or at least quasi-alive, and in ways specifically and fundamentally analogous to ourselves. Machines are becoming more human, so to speak."

Dick acknowledged that on the surface, some of his stories – *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* chief among them – seem to be a warning about the possible dangers of this technologically saturated future, and how that might change the dynamic between man and his creation. This is true to an extent, but the androids in Dick's work are metaphors for a darker and more insidious problem than the possibility of robots that think and act like ➤

"THE SCRIPT FOR BLADE RUNNER TAUGHT ME THINGS ABOUT WRITING THAT I DIDN'T KNOW" PHILIP K DICK



It may have arguably been bettered by the film adaptation, but it remains a classic work of science fiction.

5 Reasons to read... Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?

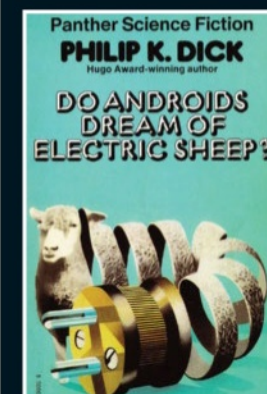
1 Because you haven't yet. Philip K Dick is one of the precious few science fiction authors whose body of work is required reading for anyone attempting to understand the genre. It's not his best work, but it's still essential.

2 *Blade Runner* is so much better. That may not sound like much of a recommendation, but when source novels are so often superior to their film adaptations it's instructive to examine those that reverse the trend.

3 Knowing *Blade Runner* is not the same as knowing the book. Ridley Scott's classic film may be a more resonant and captivating article of science fiction, but *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* is very different in a number of ways.

4 Science fiction is the literature of ideas, and nobody in Dick's era was better at generating ideas. *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* has dated, but it's as intellectually stimulating now as ever before.

5 It gets more and more relevant with every passing year. Granted, we're a long way from creating a convincing simulation of intelligence, but companies like Google and Amazon are investing huge amounts in robotics. We'll get there.

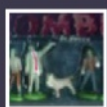


There has never been a more relevant time to read it than now.



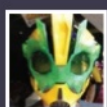
Your Take On The Classic

WHAT YOU
THOUGHT
@SCIFINOW



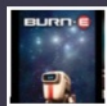
"Dark and ugly, just like everything else he's ever written. #notabigfan

#ICYMI. #BookClub"
@ginafish54



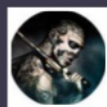
"It's hard to work through as lot of it's about concepts of sci-fi which are good though. Great plot though, is very well written. #BookClub"

@BatmanBaggins



"Loved the Mercerism aspect but it's not his best work. A Scanner Darkly

beats it. #BookClub"
@THEBURNSUNIT999



"I think *Blade Runner* is a great 'free' adaptation. A faithful adaptation from

book to cinema, wouldn't work out at all. #BookClub"
@4ndres4lvarez



"Starts slow, then get better. Maybe the saddest from PKD. #BookClub"

@ajv67



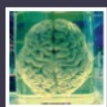
"Really enjoyed it, maybe more than *Blade Runner* which often makes me nod off

: #BookClub" @crammus



"Why bother? Seen all the cuts of *Blade Runner*, one of them must follow the book,

right? #BookClub" @ConorMJG



"it's great. So much bleaker and more complex than the film it became.

#BookClub" @sickeningjar

What do you think? Let us know on Twitter or Facebook

"WHAT IS IT, IN OUR BEHAVIOUR, THAT WE CAN CALL SPECIFICALLY HUMAN?"

PHILIP K DICK

Issue 95's
Essential Read:
Beowulf

Join in and share your thoughts on
Twitter or Facebook



➤ humans: humans that think and act like robots.

"Made in a laboratory – that aspect is not meaningful to me; the entire universe is one vast laboratory, and out of it come sly and cruel entities which smile as they reach out to shake hands. But their handshake is the grip of death, and their smile has the coldness of the grave.

"I would like then to ask this: what is it, in our behaviour, that we can call specifically human? That is special to us as a living species? And what is it that, at least up to now, we can consign as merely machine behaviour, or, by extension, insect behaviour, or reflex behaviour?"

Passivity, subservience, obedience, compliance – all qualities that, to Dick's mind, allowed people to be "pounded down, manipulated, [and] made into a means without one's knowledge or consent." In comparison to the placid indifference he witnessed in the world, supposedly deplorable qualities like lying, cheating, stealing and defiance in general seem like the very essence of what it is to be human. And Dick saw those qualities

in the world, too; in the counterculture, where young people were questioning the wisdom and authority of their parents, their governments and their inherited beliefs. They could see the androids walking among us, they recognised their programmed behaviours, and they had no interest in joining their ranks.

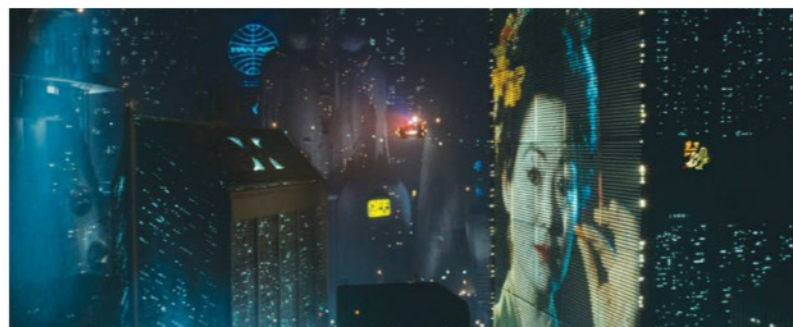
"This is what I wish to say to you here, today," Dick concluded. "I wish to disclose my hope, my faith, in the kids who are emerging now. Their world, their values. And, simultaneously, their imperviousness to the false values, the false idols, the false hates, of the previous generations. The fact that they, these fine, good kids, cannot be reached or moved or even touched by the gravity that has made us older persons fall, against our knowledge or will, at 32 feet per second per second throughout our lives... while believing that we desired it."

This is the idea at the heart of Dick's novel. Not what humanity is in comparison to synthetic life, but what authentic human behaviour is in comparison to the inauthentic, and at the root of it is empathy. In another essay called 'Man, Android and

Machine', Dick suggests that empathic behaviour is what defines humanity, regardless of whether the source is another person or a robotic taxi-cab. "Man' or 'human being' are terms which we must understand correctly and apply, but they apply not to origin or to any ontology, but to a way of being in the world; if a mechanical construct halts in its customary operation to lend you assistance, then you will posit to it, gratefully, a humanity which no analysis of its transistors and relay-systems can elucidate."

Indeed, while *Blade Runner* is a superior work of science fiction, the liberties taken with the source material obfuscate this aspect of its message. Androids and their desire for freedom are vital to the story, but so too are sheep – both electrical and otherwise. For Dick, fears over the erosion of humanity are more tied to the destruction of the natural world than the creation of artificial life. With most wildlife destroyed by nuclear war, and the irradiated landscape unsuitable for any attempt at renewal, the ownership of an animal has become a signifier of social status. With enough money and influence, a human can show that they understand what was lost when civilisation finally turned on itself; for everyone else, there are synthetic stand-ins.

"I like [*Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?*] for one thing: it deals with a society in which animals are adored and rare, and a man who owns a real sheep is Somebody, and feels for that sheep a vast bond of love and empathy," Dick wrote in a biographical sketch, reprinted in *The Shifting Realities Of Philip K Dick*. "Willis, my tomcat, strides silently over the pages of that book, being




Above all, the book interrogates the nature of identity.



important as he is, with his long golden twitching tail. Make them understand, he says to me, that animals are really that important right now."

The results of the Voight-Kampff Test – which bounty hunters use to identify rogue androids – are decided based on timed responses to images and objects from the natural world. *Blade Runner*, for all its visual brilliance, effectively removes these ecological overtones, becoming a more literal expression of the 'man vs machine' idea in the process. Was that evident in the draft of David Peoples' script? Did Dick realise that this aspect of his story would be lost in Ridley Scott's glorious retelling?

Perhaps not, though in the end something of that message does survive. Whatever future humanity is now making for itself, the seismic changes that shape it will be decided by the values we see as essential to our nature. Life on one side, artifice on the other, whether skin and bones or chips and wires.

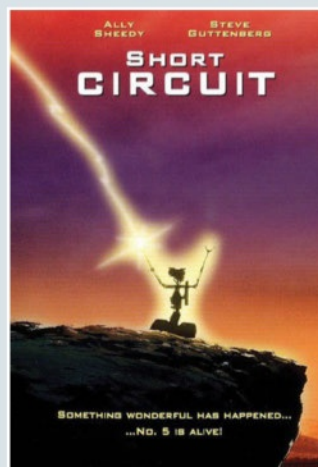
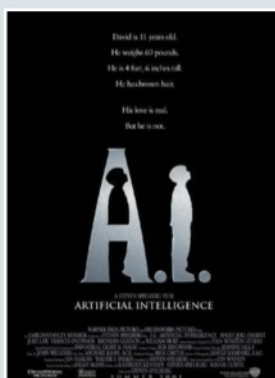
"What, more than anything else I have ever encountered, I believe in. And would give my life for. My full measure of devotion, in this war we are fighting, to maintain, and augment, what is human about us, what is the core of ourselves, and the source of our destiny," Dick said in 'The Android & The Human'. "Our flight must be not only to the stars but into the nature of our own beings. Because it is not merely *where* we go, to Alpha Centaurus or Betelgeuse, but what we are as we make our pilgrimages there. Our natures will be going there, too. 'Ad astra' – but 'per hominem'. And we must never lose sight of that." 

Where Have I Seen This Before?

RISE OF THE MACHINES

AI ▶

Now the sense of injustice that Stanley Kubrick never got to make one of his dream projects has died away, it's high time for a reappraisal of Steven Spielberg's remarkable interpretation. Sure, it doesn't entirely work at times, but when it does it's as good as any SF film since *Blade Runner*, and stands alongside the very best work from Spielberg's long and illustrious career.

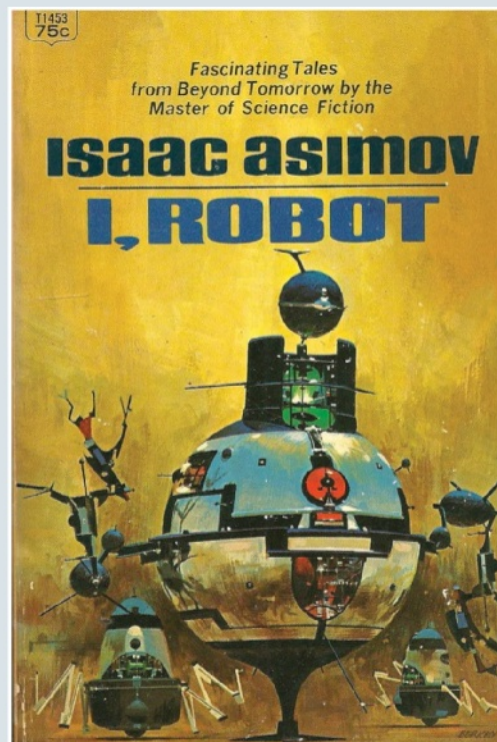


◀ SHORT CIRCUIT

It's important to remember that not all science fiction is smart, insightful or, in the case of *Short Circuit*, even passably entertaining. If you were a child in the Eighties, however, this 'comedy' may have been your first encounter with the deep and complex issue so capably explored by the other entries on this list. Somehow, the sequel managed to be even worse.

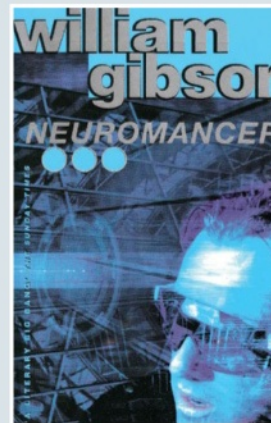
RUR ▶

Any discussion about robots and science fiction must necessarily begin with Karel Capek's influential play. Written in 1920 and first staged the following year, *RUR* marks the first use of the term 'robot' anywhere in culture – it is derived from the Czech word 'robota', which implies forced labour. Prior to this, 'android' or 'automaton' were more commonly used.



I, ROBOT

Isaac Asimov's short story collection marks one of the rare occasions where science fiction has played a role in the discussion of actual science. The 'Three Laws of Robotics', while not applicable to the robots that currently exist, have been scrutinised and debated by leading figures working in artificial intelligence and related fields. It's a good read, too.



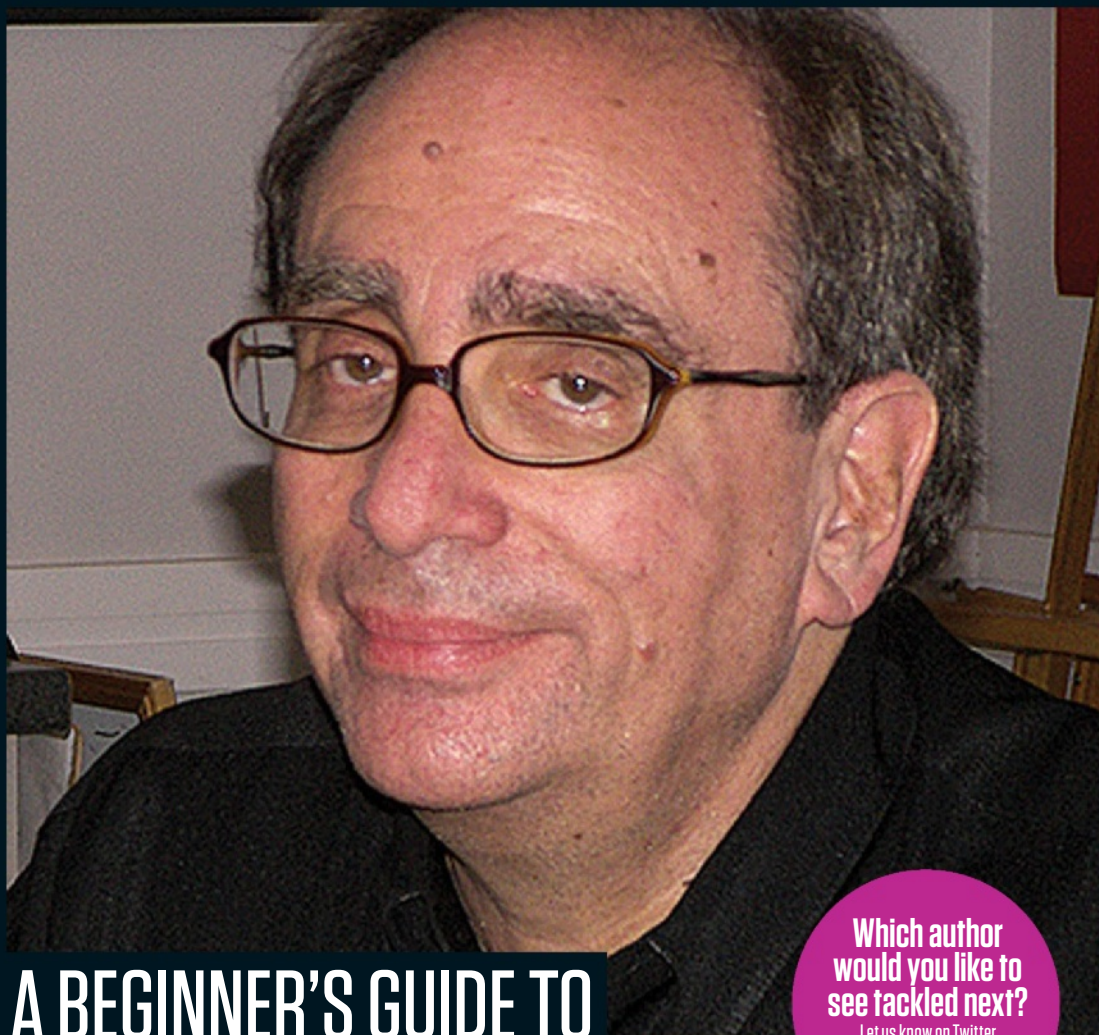
◀ NEUROMANCER

William Gibson has often been questioned about the influence of Philip K Dick on his work. The truth is that Gibson was no great fan, but the confusion is understandable: in *Neuromancer*, he probes the relationship between humanity and technology with the sort of sharp imagination and stylistic flair for which Dick is rightly celebrated.

FRANKENSTEIN ▶

While Philip K Dick was certainly an original voice in science fiction, the exploration of what it means to be human through the creation of artificial life is as old as the genre itself. Case in point, Mary Shelley's 1818 classic; one of the most potent expressions of the dark side of technological progress ever written.





A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RL STINE

Where to start
with the master of
Goosebumps

Speak to almost anyone of a certain age who ever picked up a book as a kid, and they will likely go into raptures when they tell you about R.L. Stine and *Goosebumps*. For a generation of readers, the *Goosebumps* series was a gateway to a previously unknown world. For some of us, they were the beginning of a love of horror that would lead to Stephen King, Anne Rice and Clive Barker. For others, they were a terrifying but fun jolt that would soon be paraphrased as gruesome stories to tell our friends.

The man behind this phenomenon is R.L. Stine. He became a one-man industry in the early Nineties, and his name has become synonymous with

children's horror. Stine was born in Ohio in 1943, and studied English at Ohio State University before going into writing. Much of his early work was humour, rather than horror, creating a magazine called *Bananas*

**"GOOSEBUMPS WAS A
GATEWAY TO A WORLD
OF LITERATURE"**

which he ran from 1975-1984. In 1986, Stine turned to horror and wrote for the hugely popular *Goosebumps* precursor *Point Horror*. He also wrote for the *Fear Street* and *Space Cadets* series, before launching *Goosebumps* in 1992.

Which author
would you like to
see tackled next?

Let us know on Twitter
or Facebook



WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Using classic horror tropes and traditions, Stine began a long-running series of stories designed to scare the daylights out of children. His novels created a believably mundane world into which the supernatural and the scary were somehow allowed to creep in. There's always a very real sense that things aren't going to work out for our heroes, and Stine's knack for cliffhangers and twists would routinely leave the young readers desperate to get their hands on the next instalment.

As with any long-running series, *Goosebumps* has its ups and downs but at its best it defined horror for a generation of young readers and left many of us sleeping with the light on...

Goosebumps' best/worst book titles

SOME OF THE BOOKS'
MORE MEMORABLE
MONIKERS

THE SCARECROW
WALKS AT
MIDNIGHT

PIANO
LESSONS
CAN BE
MURDER

THE ABOMINABLE
SNOWMAN OF
PASADENA

THE
CUCKOO
CLOCK OF
DOOM

THE BLOB THAT ATE
EVERYONE

I LIVE IN
YOUR
BASEMENT!

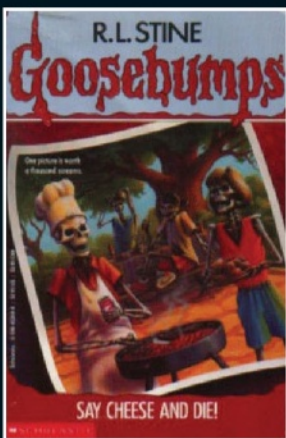
A SHOCKER ON
SHOCK STREET



The subsequent TV adaptation of the series proved to be similarly iconic.



For many children, *Goosebumps* provided a route into more adult-orientated horror.

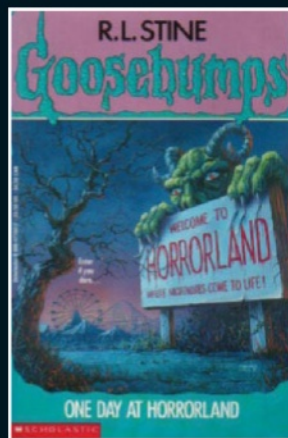


Killer camera

A picture is worth a thousand screams

SAY CHEESE AND DIE!
Publisher: Scholastic
Published: 1992
Price: £2.68 (kindle edition)
 When young Greg finds an old camera in an abandoned house, he's got no reason to think that it's got supernatural properties, but he soon discovers that the camera takes pictures of future events, and is causing horrible accidents to happen to his subjects. There's a tremendous atmosphere of dread and a sense that events are out of his control. A disappointing sequel followed, as well as a *Goosebumps HorrorLand* follow-up, but this first instalment is doom-laden and deeply creepy.

“Gonna have to go with ‘no, thank you.’ That book traumatised me as a child. All of the *Goosebumps* did, really. #BookClub” @weirdlybearded



One hell of a ride

Enter, if you dare...

ONE DAY AT HORRORLAND
Publisher: Scholastic
Published: 1994
Price: £4.28
 One of the most popular entries in the franchise, *One Day At HorrorLand* explores one of the great American traditions – the family visit to a theme park – and gives it the Stine touch. When the Morris family get lost on the way to the Zoo Gardens Theme Park, they find HorrorLand instead. Things seem strange from the get-go, but when their parents disappear, they soon realise that the rides aren't meant to be fun. There's a great *Twilight Zone* reveal as well as some fantastically skin-crawling moments.

“I used to love *HorrorLand* books! I remember being really scared! I wish I had kept them for my children! #BookClub” @funkyfish586

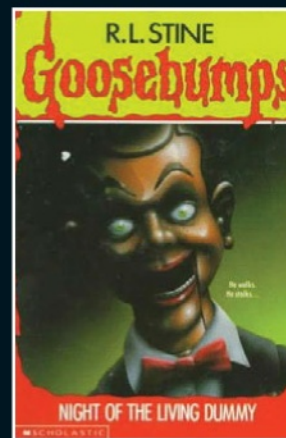


Second skin

If looks could kill...

THE HAUNTED MASK
Publisher: Scholastic
Published: 1993
Price: £4.23
 Sarah is relentlessly bullied by her classmates. When Halloween comes around, she decides to fight back, and picks out the most horrifying mask at the costume shop, despite the protests of the owner. She discovers that she can now scare the life out of her tormentors, but why is it so hard for her to take the mask off? With a sympathetic protagonist and a brilliant cliffhanger ending, there's a reason why *The Haunted Mask* has stuck in the memories of all who read it.

“My favourite. I had every book, and passed them on to my seven-year-old son, who loves them as much as I did! #BookClub” @staceyray86



It's alive!

He walks, he stalks...

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DUMMY
Publisher: Scholastic
Published: 1993
Price: £2.63 (kindle edition)
 Stine created his most enduring character by drawing on one of horror's creepiest staples: the ventriloquist's dummy. When siblings Lindy and Kris find one, Lindy names it Slappy and becomes a neighbourhood sensation. Kris gets one of his own, but Mr Wood's 'pranks' start getting violent, and no one will believe that Kris has nothing to do with it. Slappy would become an iconic creation, and his appearance here has one of the best twist endings of the series.

“Ah, to be a young terrified child again. One of many *Goosebumps* books that eased me into horror. #BookClub” @D_Cuthbert



Adult horror

For those who grew up reading *Goosebumps*

RED RAIN
Publisher: Definitions
Published: 2012
Price: £7.99
 As well as being a prolific children's author, Stine has written four novels for adults. The most successful of these was *Red Rain*, which Stine claimed was for those who had grown up reading *Goosebumps* and were now adults. After visiting a town decimated by a hurricane, writer Lea Sutter brings two 12-year-old twin orphans home with her. When they start acting out, Lea attributes it to PTSD, but is it something more sinister? As with his books for younger readers, Stine wears his influences on his sleeve.

“Spooky kids are always scary – and they get creepier when they're in the US. *Red Rain* for me. #BookClub” @debbiemjohnson

Your Five Best Cyberpunk

CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE @SCIFINOW ON TWITTER



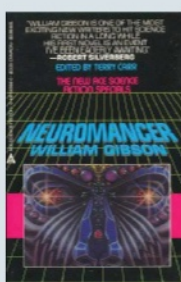
1. Hardwired
Walter Jon Williams.
"A crazy-prescient yet allegorical look at haves and have nots, and packed full of action to boot.
#BookClub"
@Celluloid Whisky



2. Pollen
Jeff Noon
"Great characters, impending doom and dog men, all taking place in a truly terrifying but believable world.
#BookClub"
@HEYcactus



3. Snow Crash
Neal Stephenson
"The balance of parody and sci-fi that makes you worry that the world could end up like that.
#BookClub"
@IamLeggy



4. Neuromancer
William Gibson
"Because matrix. Because coffins. Because it's tight. No *Neuromancer* = no *Matrix*.
#BookClub"
@odnomiar78



5. Vurt
Jeff Noon
"Back on the subject of Jeff Noon, I liked *Vurt* as well. Not sure if it entirely counts as cyberpunk though.
#BookClub"
@stefmatt68

Details Author: David Ramirez Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton Price: £16.99 Released: Out now



THE FOREVER WATCH

World Wide Web of intrigue

Set in a city-sized starship on a millennium-long voyage, soundtracked by the crooning sax of telepathically streamed jazz, *The Forever Watch* is very much a neo-noir sci-fi thriller. In a world where all deeds – and even thoughts – are publicly shared online among the starship's crewmen, a man is murdered, his body so ruined that his identity can only be established by DNA evidence. But within hours all trace of the crime has been covered up as if it never happened.

Mid-level bureaucrat Hana Dempsey is thrown into the mystery by the only remaining witness: her lover Leon, an ex-cop who found the body. Unable to investigate in an official capacity, Leon needs her computer skills to hack the ship's telepathic internet, the Nth web, to solve the mysterious death. Despite Leon being a big, brutish footsoldier,

it's Hana who takes on the role of our interstellar Sam Spade by narrating this deep-space detective story. Having just suffered the trauma of breeding duty, in which female staff are used as comatose incubators to grow new crewmembers, she throws herself into the investigation, as much

deeper, Hana and Leon discover that the truth is much more disturbing than they can possibly imagine; so dangerous that it could tear the ship apart.

Author David Ramirez sets up progressively darker and more enticing mysteries, but is very slow to deliver answers. While in this world of panoptic

"A CASCADE OF REVELATIONS LEAD TO EXPLOSIVE ACTION SCENES AND TIE TOGETHER THE NOVEL'S THEMES"

to escape the longing for her lost child as to comfort Leon.

However, after harnessing the ship's supercomputers to seek out the 'mincemeat murderer,' she uncovers the impossible: a serial killer has been operating on board the ship for a lifetime, if not longer. As they dig

surveillance it makes sense that Hana and Leon should go about their day-to-day duties and only carry out their investigations after dark, but this often seems like an excuse for the writer's self-indulgence. We have no problem with world-building, but too much time is committed to considering civil planning and the need for efficiency savings on a spaceship. The result is that it is easy to grow weary with *The Forever Watch*.

Perhaps part of the problem is that the action scenes are too few and far apart, and all the investigations are virtual. Ramirez, a computer scientist himself, can write poetically about proxy servers and exploring the depths of the darkweb, but this doesn't compare to the rough and tumble of a real-world PI getting into fights down dark alleys and leaning on perps for clues. Still, the second half more than makes up for any initial sluggishness, with a cascade of revelations that give way to explosive action scenes and tie together the novel's varied themes.

In a post-PRISM world, the story of secret goings on and government cover-ups in a society that willingly over-shares online seems highly topical. However, *The Forever Watch* is a more timeless novel than that, asking bigger questions about how much we really want to know about our lives and what purpose that serves.

Jack Parsons

VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Shining Girls
Lauren Beukes
A time-travelling crime thriller in which the intended victim of a serial killer hunts her assassin.





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REVIEWS BOOKS

Details Writer: Seanan McGuire Publisher: Corsair Price: £6.99 Released: Out now

DISCOUNT ARMAGEDDON

All kinds of everything

Picture the scene: it's the middle of the night, and a blonde cheerleader is about to head down a dark alley. Whose safety are you more afraid for – hers, or the supernatural creature lurking in the shadows? Joss Whedon's *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* so completely flipped the script on monster stories that it's just not surprising any more when perky blondes turn out to be experienced fighters – which is exactly what *Discount Armageddon's* Verity Price is.

Part-time cocktail waitress, sometime reality TV star and full-time cryptozoologist Verity spends her time maintaining the paranormal ecosystem by monitoring 'cryptids' and killing any that pose a danger to humans. So when something starts killing off young girls, she sets out to find out what's going on. But that's not going to be easy, especially when there's a shadowy cryptid-killing society breathing down her neck.

It might take you a few chapters to get past the self-consciousness of McGuire's prose,

but if you do so then there's a lot to enjoy. Although the story runs along familiar lines, the world-building is gleefully imaginative, throwing in every single supernatural creature you've ever heard of – plus half a dozen more for good measure.

Not all of them are as interesting or charming as they're intended to be, but the sheer variety makes up for that. And while Verity's relentless snarkiness wears at times, her self-confidence and lack of sexual hang-ups makes a refreshing change from the angsty teens that usually fight evil.

It's a pretty lightweight read, but if you're still mourning the end of *Buffy* then this might help fill that gap.

Sarah Dobbs

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Dead Until Dark
Charlaine Harris

The *Southern Vampire Mysteries* series offers a similar mixture of monsters and sexiness.

"THROWS IN EVERY SUPERNATURAL CREATURE YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF"

Details Author: Kelley Armstrong Publisher: Atom Price: £6.99 Released: Out now

SEA OF SHADOWS

Waves of suspense

After their town is destroyed, twins Moira and Ashyn hunt for sanctuary – and each other – in the first instalment in Kelley Armstrong's *Age Of Legends* trilogy. Despite being siblings, Armstrong has commendably juxtaposed their personalities, resulting in two very different but extremely likeable leads.

Written from both girls' perspectives, the prose flows effortlessly, with its well-timed switches between the protagonists providing enough suspense to keep us gripped without halting at crucial moments.

Despite a too-comfortably paced start, things pick up – and stay that way – after the town's attack, with the girls running into various hideouts and creatures they believed to be fictional as they battle through the wastelands to warn those nearby of impending danger. As fond as we are of traditional supernatural creatures, it's refreshing to have a break from the typical vampire, werewolf and zombie-fuelled fiction plaguing the sci-fi shelves of late. Armstrong has created completely new

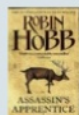
monsters, which can be risky, but it pays off handsomely here, highlighting her clear vision for this fictional world.

With leads aged 16, both travelling with male companions, the love-struck teen scenes are to be expected. However, some may be surprised by Armstrong's rebellion towards the stereotype. Romance is hinted at, but physical contact and awkward declarations of devotion are minimal. In fact, she's seemingly opted for a more honest route, poking fun at fairy-tale endings and openly expressing Moira's curiosity towards men in a no-strings-attached fashion.

There is plenty to be enjoyed by those outside the intended target audience, and you're likely to want to keep an eye out for the remainder of the *Age Of Legends* trilogy.

Rowena Heal

VERDICT ★★★★★



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Assassin's Apprentice
Robin Hobb

Cast out for being the bastard of a royal prince, Fitz is now training to be a deadly assassin.



GO SECONDS WITH

Jake Arnott



Why did you choose the Sixth Doctor? Were you a Colin Baker fan?

Not a fan so much, but I do feel a certain affinity with him – all that bombast and arrogance actually hides quite a

fragile ego. And I felt he'd be the perfect foil for Doctor Dee.

You must have had a lot of fun with Doctor John Dee! How was it fitting him into the Doctor Who universe?

If I had a one-line pitch for this story when I started it was 'Doctor Who meets Doctor Dee', and that really got me going. Dee fits so well into this world – if you look at his extraordinary life – mathematician, astrologer, alchemist, magician – he seems like a kind of renegade Time Lord himself. I think there's so much scope with him that you could have a whole series of stories where these two Doctors meet.

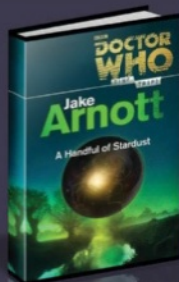
"DOCTOR DEE FITS SO WELL INTO THIS WORLD – HE SEEMS LIKE A KIND OF RENEGADE TIME LORD HIMSELF"

Why did you decide to write a historical episode rather than something set in space or on an alien planet?

Well, we do go to another star system, so I get my cake and eat it, but yes, I did start out with the historical background. It is fascinating to me, that the observation of the supernova in Cassiopeia in 1572 really did change the way people saw the universe. If I was a Time Lord I think I would always be going back in time. It's what I love about being a novelist.

Did writing the Doctor present a different challenge to writing a character that you created yourself?

Yes it did. It simply isn't your property anymore, which is interesting and a great challenge to the author ego. It's like being part of a collective, telling a story that has to belong to a greater narrative and knowing that the reader probably knows more than you do.



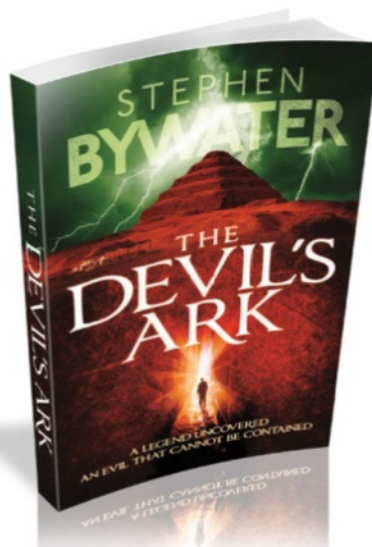
Doctor Who: A Handful Of Stardust is available to download now.

Details Author: Stephen Bywater **Publisher:** Headline Publishing **Price:** £7.99 **Released:** Out now

THE DEVIL'S ARK

A dark supernatural thriller

Set in 1930, Stephen Bywater's debut tells the story of World War I veteran Harry Ward – a man physically and mentally scarred by his experiences, now working as a photographer in Mesopotamia.



If returning to his wartime battleground wasn't bad enough, he takes a job at an archaeological dig that could be the temple of Lilith – the first wife of Adam, cast out of Eden for refusing to submit.

Legend has it that she and her demonic daughters visit men in the night to breed and feed. As the dig progresses, Harry begins to wonder what is lurking within this sinister shrine. The dread builds until something is unleashed and the body count begins to rise.

Bywater's choice of narrator is apt: a former soldier, exploring the ruins of a once-mighty civilisation. This clash of the old and new world is an irresistible theme to explore, and the author weaves it in well.

As you might gather from a story focused on a theological femme fatale, Bywater's story touches on patriarchy's fear of female sexuality. Harry's affair with a

married woman compounds his guilt, making him feel irrevocably tainted and easy prey for whatever is stalking men in the night.

Yet Harry feels like a closed book. It's hard to get under his skin, at least until the action kicks in. Flashbacks to his army days at times feel used to tick back-story boxes, although the supporting cast is rather well drawn.

The Devil's Ark is a rather uncomplicated read, with short chapters and a spine-tingling story you could devour in a weekend. Once it gets going it's a very gripping read indeed.

Krystal Sim

VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Exorcist
William Peter Blatty
A conflicted priest is called upon to exorcise a demon from a disturbed young girl.



Details Author: Graham Edwards **Publisher:** Solaris **Price:** £7.99 **Released:** Out now

TALUS AND THE FROZEN KING

The Vikings' answer to Sherlock Holmes

Talus And The Frozen King

sets about telling the story of this olden-time Sherlock Holmes and his John Watson. It is a comparison that springs to mind every time that Talus (Holmes) and Bran (Watson) interact.

The plot itself isn't complicated: the duo must find out who murdered the old king of Creyk. The story of six brothers who have lost a father, desperate to live by their individual values, breathes life into the idea that a person is of their own making.

Talus himself finds death interesting, and like Holmes he is rather harsh in his words, but an honourable man at heart. What he lacks in social skills he makes up for with his brilliant

mind. He is also a bard, but can be somewhat lacking in his way of words when talking to others. For the most part it makes him rather unlikable; something of a typical standard for a Sherlockian tale.

Bran provides the everyman role – an excellent entrance for the reader to access the story. With his sassy retorts and often tired approach to dealing with the bard's remarks, he often provides much-needed comic relief during Talus' more irritating moments.

The novel is rich with sublime imagery that leaves the imagination with a wealth of material to work from, yet its beauty can often be dashed by Talus' blunt remarks and make the plot hard to engage with.



Overall, it is an interesting first venture into this world, but suffers from the pitfalls of a know-it-all detective who might have seen more inventive days.

Jen Neal

VERDICT ★★☆☆

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Silver Pigs
Lindsey Davis
The first in a series following Marcus Didius Falco as a detective in Ancient Rome.



Details Author: Charlaine Harris Publisher: Gollancz Price: £18.99 Released: Out now

MIDNIGHT CROSSROAD

Life after True Blood

The **Sookie Stackhouse** novels have been laid to rest, and *Midnight Crossroad* marks the beginning of a new trilogy. It's set in the remote and rural town of Midnight, Texas – a quirky Royston Vasey-type of place where newcomers are greeted with twitching curtains and furtive whispers. But when genuine psychic Manfred Bernardo moves in, the tight-knit community accepts him right away.

Fans of Charlaine Harris' work will recognise the character from the *Harper Connelly* series, and his new landlord happens to be Bobo Winthrop from the *Lily Bard Mysteries*. You needn't be acquainted with them beforehand though, since the third-person omniscient narration introduces us to the entire cast. Some of our favourite new characters include a witch named Fiji and the mysterious Reverend who's definitely harbouring a secret. In fact, it's hinted that most of the inhabitants are, and while a few are exposed in this novel, there are still plenty more to uncover.

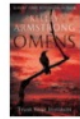
It's a gentle read that ticks along with the steady pace of America's Deep South,

but when a corpse is discovered at a picnic a mystery is set in motion. Everyone's a suspect, particularly Bobo, because the body turns out to be that of his ex-girlfriend. This genre is what Harris excels at, and the ending was an unexpected surprise. We were only sad not to see more supernatural elements at play. It's clear that creatures exist in this new world, with shape-shifters and a vampire in residence, but they lurk in the periphery. And while romance was hinted at, we want some action in later books to complicate life for the Midnight folk.

All in all, *Midnight Crossroad* represents a promising start to a new series, and we get the feeling that like Royston Vasey, once you've entered, you'll never leave.

Jodie Tyley

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

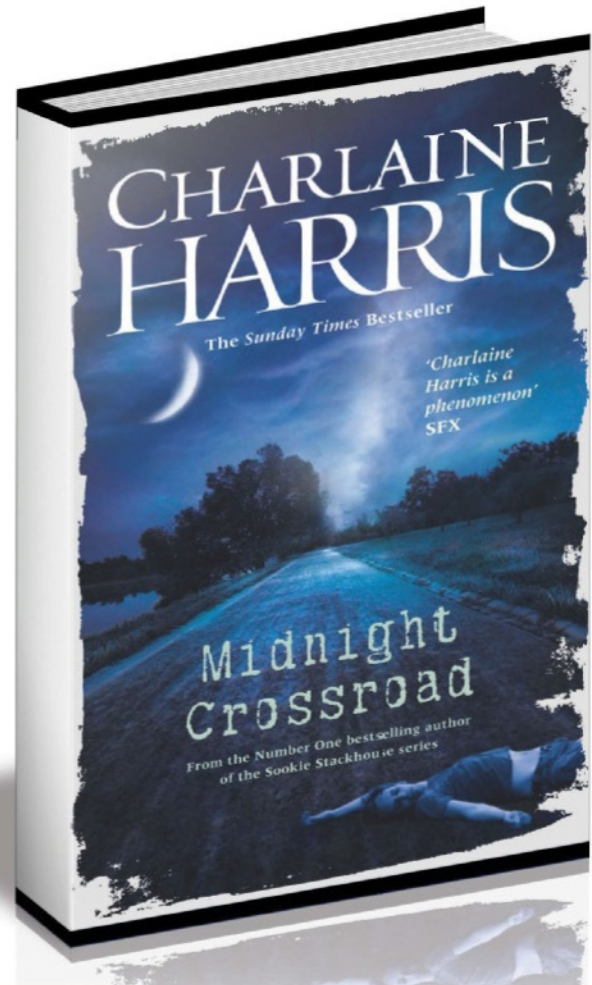


IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Omens

Kelley Armstrong

When Olivia's life falls apart, she ends up in the small town of Cainsville, Illinois, which is full of secrets.



Details Author: Julie Myerson Publisher: Hammer/Random House Price: £9.99 Released: Out now

THE QUICKENING

Take a break from all your troubles

The latest in Hammer's series of novellas finds Julie Myerson delivering a holiday ghost story that would almost certainly be best read on a sandy beach somewhere.

Rachel has just married her husband Dan, and is pregnant with their first child. As a surprise, he takes her to Antigua, but is her dizziness and nausea due to the growing life inside of her? And if so, why do objects seem to fly off the walls and tables, why do people on the island warn her to look after her husband, and exactly how well does she know Dan at all?

Myerson ensures that Rachel's descent into unhappiness and paranoia develops at a scary but plausible pace. She makes the most of the setting, combining the trappings of an island paradise and the enforced companionship of



fellow tourists to create a powder-keg environment.

However, it's fairly predictable, even as Rachel's hallucinations and reality blur. The pace and brevity allows Myerson to paper over most of the cracks, and it's certainly best read quickly.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

Details Author: Joshua Winning Publisher: Peridot Press Price: £6.99 Released: 19 May

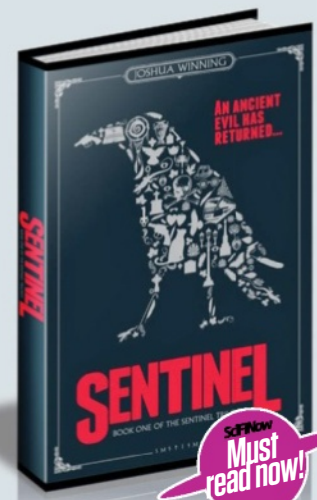
SENTINEL

Secrets, lies and teenage sighs

It's not easy being a teenager, so spare a thought for the hormonal hero of Joshua Winning's debut.

Nicholas is just 15 when his parents are killed. After being taken by a previously unknown godmother to a secluded house, he learns that he is a descendant of the Sentinels, an underground society of supernatural protectors. As if this isn't enough, the Sentinels are being bumped off and an ancient evil is resurfacing.

Sentinel marks the start of a new young adult fantasy trilogy, and despite the formulaic good-versus-evil theme, the narrative is hugely engaging. The absence of unnecessary romantic distractions gives more time for character development, ensuring the reader gives a damn. Nicholas is the epitome of teenage rebellion, and



marks a change from the older female leads of more recent hits.

Winning could well be on to a winner with this unsettling but entertaining icebreaker. Hopefully Nicholas and this trilogy will mature nicely together.

Claire Nicholls

VERDICT ★★☆☆☆

GO SECONDS WITH

Jim Butcher



So where do we find Harry Dresden at the start of *Skin Game*? Is he in as tough a spot as we left him, parasite and all?

Never let it be said that Harry starts a new book in as tough a spot as he was in during the last one. If at all possible, I want it to be a much worse spot, and that's what he's in as *Skin Game* begins. He's been trapped out on the island of Demonreach for more than a year, struggling to cope with its dangers and mysteries, and wondering when his head was going to explode.

What is it about Harry Dresden as a character that keeps you coming back? I don't really look at it as 'coming back' to Harry. I started telling Harry's story a while back, and I'm still telling it. I take a break once in a while to work on other people's stories, but I don't really feel as if I'm putting Harry and his world away when I do that. I'm just setting this one big story on the

"FOR THE MOST PART I'M STILL WRITING MY DUMB LITTLE WIZARD BOOKS THAT I STARTED ON IN COLLEGE"

back-burner to simmer for a time while I cook up something else. Harry is still Harry to me. He has a lot of new challenges and responsibilities, but he's fundamentally the same person in almost every way.

The 15th anniversary of *The Dresden Files* is not very far away. How does it feel to look back and think about the legacy of the novels?

I try not to pay too much attention to things like that. For the most part, I'm still writing my dumb little wizard books that I started on in college – it's just that someone has tricked the world into thinking that they are popular and awesome. I

continually feel like I'm staring at a glitch in the Matrix – and I don't want to go rocking the boat at this point!

Skin Game by Jim Butcher is available on 27 May from Orbit.

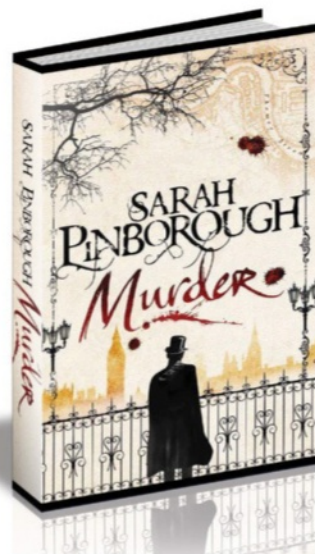


Details Author: Sarah Pinborough Publisher: Quercus Price: £16.99 Released: Out now

MURDER

Suffer the little children

Following on from *Mayhem*, Sarah Pinborough's *Murder* finds Victorian surgeon Thomas Bond in even murkier waters. Time has healed most of the mental wounds left by the Thames Torso murders,



but the shadow of Jack the Ripper still lingers over London, and Dr Bond can't shake the feeling that something still waits in the river. When new evidence prompts him to look into the events of the past, Dr Bond discovers that the evil force he thought he had destroyed is alive, and ready to wreak havoc.

Murder is more of a slow-burner than its predecessor, as Pinborough takes the time to establish how the intervening years have affected her protagonist. Dr Bond has mostly put the events of the first novel out of his mind and made his romantic interest in Juliana known, and it's the slow but deliberate dismantling of this security that makes up much of the novel's first half.

We're given a less-detailed class cross-section of late-19th Century London, with much of the narrative given to Juliana's American paramour. That being said, there's

still plenty of horrifying crimes based on real cases, and as with *Mayhem*, apparent diversions from the main thrust of the plot all lead somewhere. The cosy familiarity of these domestic dramas is shattered by the visceral shocks of the second half as the bottom falls out of Bond's world with grisly results.

Murder doesn't have the bone-chilling atmosphere of *Mayhem*, but it's looking in a slightly different direction. It's a more personal story that pulls the reader into a compelling tale of madness and, indeed, murder. It's grim, gruesome and gripping, and tremendous fun.

Jonathan Hatfull

VERDICT ★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Dracula
Bram Stoker
Many voices combine to create Bram Stoker's timeless tale of horror.

Details Author: Mario Routi Publisher: Oak Tree Press Price: £7.99 Released: Out now

REBECCA NEWTON AND THE SACRED FLAME

Cosmic balance

The latest to jump on the bandwagon of young adult fiction is Mario Routi with his *Hunger Games*-meets-*Percy Jackson*-style offering.

Rebecca Newton learns that she is an Orizon, born of the sacred flame and therefore wise beyond her years. At the age of 18 she is taken from Earth to Utopia in the Land of the White Sun, where she can accept immortality or return to Earth. Obviously, endless life comes with a price, and choosing this path also means that Rebecca must become a warrior, willing to fight the evil inhabitants of Beast, ruled by the mighty King Turgoth, whose eye Rebecca soon catches.

Rebecca is young, beautiful and courageous, but dull beyond belief. Despite using the word 'charismatic' to describe her, Routi does little to create personality or character. An early 13-page narrative devoted to her *Crocodile Dundee*-inspired efforts to save a lion in mourning for his family may convince the target audience that Rebecca is brave and noble; older, more cynical readers may just think she's smug and sanctimonious.

Rebecca Newton And The Sacred Flame is a convenient little story, but lacks depth. The characters have little substance, which prevents the reader from getting close enough to care. It will



undoubtedly be compared to Rick Riordan's much-loved *Olympians* series, thus having already shot itself in the Achilles heel, pun very much intended.

Claire Nicholls

VERDICT ★★★★★



Divergent
Veronica Roth
16-year-old Tris faces teenage angst and life-changing decisions in a future dystopia.

HARRY DRESDEN IS ON THE HEIST FROM HELL

The unmissable
**NEW DRESDEN
FILES ADVENTURE**

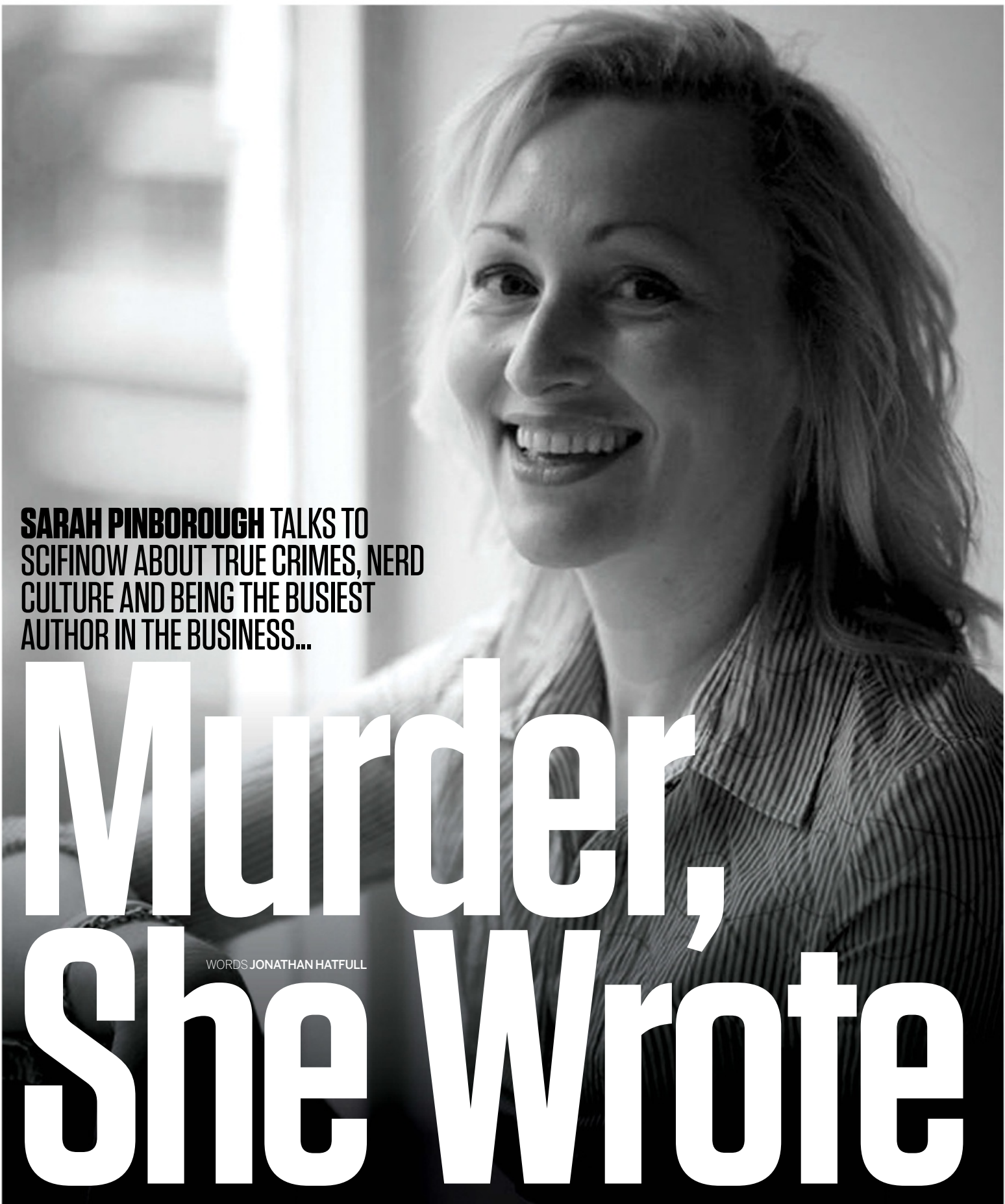
from *Sunday
Times* bestseller
Jim Butcher



OUT 27 MAY

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SARAH PINBOROUGH TALKS TO
SCIFINOW ABOUT TRUE CRIMES, NERD
CULTURE AND BEING THE BUSIEST
AUTHOR IN THE BUSINESS...

Murder, She Wrote

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Last year was a big one for Sarah Pinborough. There was her trilogy of fairy tales for grown-ups, the reprint of her beautifully moving novella *The Language Of Dying*, and her Victorian London-era horror *Mayhem*. "It was ridiculous," she laughs. "There was one point when it looked like *Mayhem* and *Poison* were going to come out on the same day! It became a joke on Twitter, 'Hey, it's another month! I've got another book out!' I wouldn't do that again. It feels like you're just selling all the time. 'Oh hi, buy another book from me!'"

2014 might not be quite as hectic, but Pinborough's work rate hasn't slowed. We met the author on a beautiful sunny day in a suitably gloomy Soho café to talk about the follow-up to *Mayhem: Murder*, in which our hero Dr Thomas Bond realises that the dark force that compelled Jack the Ripper and the Thames Torso murderer hasn't gone away. "There were so many interesting things that happened after the first book that I really wanted to go down a bit of a darker route in the second," she enthuses. "I think *Murder* is more of a horror novel than *Mayhem*, but it's a very subtle horror."

Like its predecessor, *Murder* uses real historical crimes as a base for the supernatural, and the horrifying Victorian practice of baby farming creeps into the story. "Aren't they great?" she exclaims. "Well, they're not great, obviously! They're all real. Part of the problem with the second book is that there's only one Thames Torso murder in the period after *Mayhem*, so I needed a different set of crimes. The baby farmers were something else. I think one woman killed 400, so she made a tidy profit, but she did get hanged!"

The true crime element is vital to both books, even if Pinborough says she's burned out on research. "I feel like all I've done is research for two years, and I really hate it, if I'm honest!" Possibly more crucial is the city of London itself. Pinborough has written about the dark side of the capital before, and there's a reason why she keeps coming back to it. "I just love the blend of history and

"I LOVE THE BLEND OF HISTORY AND MODERNITY IN LONDON, IT'S SUCH A VIBRANT CITY"

modernity," the author tells SciFiNow. "It's such a vibrant city, with so many stories on every street corner. It's got a grittiness that Paris doesn't have, it's got more history than New York has, there's so much going on, and I'm fascinated by the river. My next book that's coming out is very different, but that's set on a Scottish island!"

That next book is *The Death House*, which Pinborough describes as being "in the same vein" as mournful character study *The Language Of Dying*. "It is a dystopic love story, which came as a surprise to me, because I don't really do romance," she explains. "If I had to do that movie comparison-to-me thing I would say it's kind of *Lord Of The Flies* meets *Romeo & Juliet* meets *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It's about a group of young teenagers who live in this house in Scotland because they've been identified as defectives, which basically means they're dying, so they're all waiting to die, and whether they're being hurried along a bit by Matron, so it's kind of creepy. There is a murder, but it's a love story, really."

With several other projects on the go, including a TV series in development, not to mention her busy 2013, Pinborough has certainly become a household name in the genre community. "It's hard to say, isn't it, because the genre's such a weird community at the best of times," she tells us. "I've been around the horror section for a few years, and I'm always surprised if anybody knows who I am. It's not something that I really think about. Within our genre there's not a lot of room for ego, because you can have someone really successful, and ordinary people, by which I mean people who buy their books from Tesco – like 99 per cent of the population – the only one they're going to know is George RR Martin! I've said to my friends, 'Oh my God, so and so's going to

be at this convention!' They're like, 'Who? Neil Gaiman who?' 'Wow, no hope for me!'"

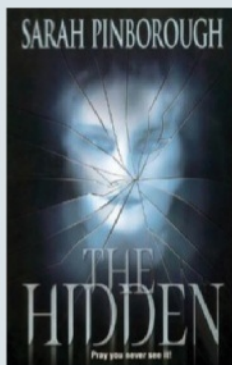
As for the community itself, we've seen examples of how protective it can be, sometimes at the expense of broadening its ranks, as recently shown by the online firestorm caused by Jonathan Ross agreeing to host the Hugo Awards, leading to his withdrawal. "This will probably get me shot down in flames in many corners, but I think there is quite a divide between professionals working in the genre and fans," Pinborough tells us. "I think the fans – not all fans, but quite a lot of fans – it's like a club to them. They have very definite [thoughts] about how things should be, whereas authors and publishers, who are doing their best to make a living in a very tough climate, want to be more inclusive. I think you need to have that more inclusive atmosphere. It can be quite closed-door at times, and I don't think it realises that it is. As with any clique, if you're in one you don't realise you're in one. 'He'll bring people in and they will laugh at us.' I was like, 'Jesus, are we still at school in the chess club or what?' It's so indicative of the world, especially the internet; everyone looks for the worst."

Still, the world outside the club is sunny indeed, and she tells us that a long to-do list is a small price to pay. "I keep thinking that I'm going to have a break," she laughs. "But you know, it could be worse – I could have no books to write, and then we wouldn't be here having coffee and a laugh!" ☺

Mayhem by Sarah Pinborough is available now from Jo Fletcher Books.



Sarah so far THE PICK OF PINBOROUGH



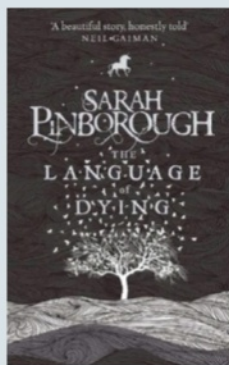
THE HIDDEN (2004)

An amnesiac is haunted by her mirror image in Pinborough's debut, the first of a series of books for American publishers Leisure Books.



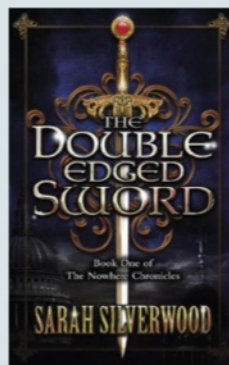
TORCHWOOD: INTO THE SILENCE (2009)

When young singers are targeted by a killer, Ianto Jones must join a choir in the first of her two *Torchwood* novels.



THE LANGUAGE OF DYING (2009)

Reprinted last year, this is a deeply personal story of the last days between a woman and her dying father.



THE NOWHERE CHRONICLES (2010-12)

Pinborough wrote this YA trilogy under the pen name of Sarah Silverwood, with an alternate London and an ancient prophecy.



THE DOG-FACED GODS (2010-2012)

This dark blend of crime and horror was released pretty much concurrently with her YA trilogy, and shows her versatility.



POISON, CHARM AND BEAUTY (2013)

Pinborough gave a trio of fairy tales an adult update with this trilogy of novellas, which gave their heroines back their... chutzpah.

Details Writer: John Smith **Artists:** Sean Phillips, Steve Yeowell
Publisher: Rebellion **Price:** £12.79 **Released:** Out now

DEVLIN WAUGH: SWIMMING IN BLOOD

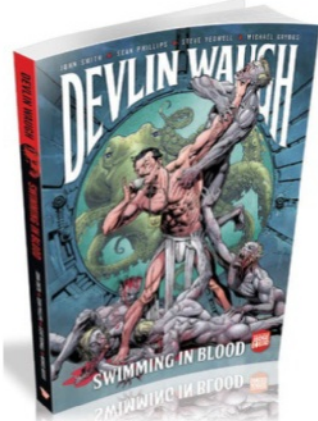
Rite ho

Strutting into the testosterone-clouded lads' club of the *Judge Dredd Megazine* in 1992, foppish exorcist Devlin Waugh couldn't have been a further departure from that grim and unrelenting world.

Muscular and sophisticated, with a Terry Thomas grin and the gleefully violent disposition of Charles Bronson, Waugh entered a rioting prison with a headache, a cigarette holder and a promise to "steal the show."

That first adventure – and its one-shot encounter with the Big Meg's ultimate lawman (*Brief Encounter*, from 1993) – are the best thanks to the Bisley-like gristle of artist Sean Phillips (*Fatale*, *Hellblazer*) who captures Waugh so perfectly, giving his fisticuffs with the undead a sort of louche indifference, and then when he clutches a young prison warden to his chest like a dress-shredding damsel in a pulp novel, it's as perfect a redress of two decades worth of scowling masculinity (albeit it brilliant) as you could ever get.

Writer and *2000 AD*'s great underrated workhorse John Smith hit his stride with the second great arc in 2005, filling it with some of the esoteric weirdness and Chthonic terror he brought to *Indigo Prime* and *Cradlegrave*, but the smooth lines of the capable Steve Yeowell (*Zenith*, *The*



Invisibles) brings the proportions down, and *Devlin* seems lessened for it. The juxtaposition of the Vatican's demon-hunting dandy with an exaggerated, fully painted art style better suited to *Dredd* or *Sláine* was what gave the first strip so much impact. The story, too, steps so far away from the recognised tropes of the *Dredd* universe (the first arc, by contrast, was clearly linked) that he seems less remarkable, and with the stakes so high you can't help but wonder where Psi-Div's Exorcist Judges are while this is going on.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★☆☆



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
Judge Anderson: The Psi Files
 Alan Grant, John Wagner/
 Various Artists
 See how the Justice
 Department handles demons.

Details Writer: Al Ewing **Artist:** Greg Land **Publisher:** Marvel/Panini
Price: £10.99 **Released:** Out now

MIGHTY AVENGERS: NO SINGLE HERO

Punching above

Inspired by late *Static Shock* creator Dwayne McDuffie and chastised for the 'contrived' nature of a mostly black/Latino team by some forum warriors, Greg Land and Al Ewing's *Mighty Avengers* relaunch was overshadowed in the panels by the *Infinity* event it sprang out of.

It definitely doesn't feel contrived, as many of the heroes left in New York while the Avengers dick around in space are likely to be the low-powered, under-appreciated and often obscure likes of White Tiger and Blue Marvel.

**"IT DEFINITELY
DOESN'T FEEL
CONTRIVED"**



Seeing New Yorkers rally is lovely and the banter is fantastic, especially when Falcon reminds Luke Cage that his name isn't "and the Falcon" when he assumes he's there on Cap's behalf.

James Hoare
VERDICT ★★★★★

Details Writers: Matt Kindt **Artist:** Marco Rudy
Publisher: Marvel/Panini **Price:** £10.99 **Released:** Out now

SPIDER-MAN: 99 PROBLEMS

But a plot ain't one

Seemingly out-of-continuity

Spidey romp *99 Problems* is kin to *Batman* stories *Arkham Asylum* and *Hush* in that it seems to exist primarily as an showcase for the fluid art skills of Marco Rudy (*Swamp Thing*), who jumps between styles with dizzying regularity, playing Chris Burnham perspective tricks and dabbling in David Aja-style IKEA pictorals, often within a breath.

Unlike *Arkham Asylum*, though, which benefited from Grant Morrison's rambling psychoanalysis, or even the simplistic *Hush*, which had a touch of *Where's My Cow?* about it, *99 Problems* is a plotless scramble from fight-to-fight and setting-to-setting that moves



so briskly that it's ultimately unreadable.

The art is very difficult to follow too, and when it's all about the art that's unforgivable.

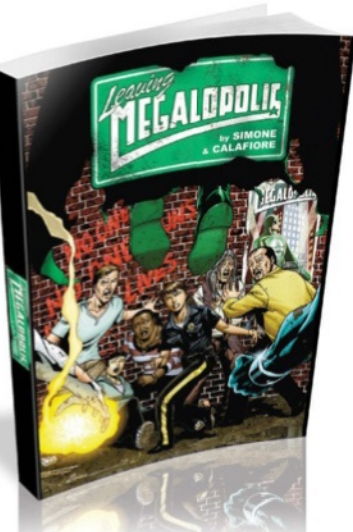
James Hoare
VERDICT ★★☆☆



Details Author: Gail Simone Artist: Jim Calafiore Publisher: Dark Horse Price: £9.05 Released: 23 September

LEAVING MEGALOPOLIS

Uncivil war



DC superstar Gail Simone is the Joss Whedon of comics – not in the sense of her writing style or recurring themes (although you can make comparisons if you feel so inclined) so much as the outpouring of well-earned grief that follows the end of her fan-favourite, long-running series and their dysfunctional casts.

We saw it most recently with *The Movement*, and before that with *Birds Of Prey* – the book that really cemented her reputation – but it's *Secret Six*, where she worked with

artist Jim Calafiore (*Aquaman*, *Exiles*) that hit particularly hard.

Based around a group of DC supervillains trying to find a fiscally sound third way between good and no-good, it was sharp, sexy and frequently hilarious. Launched on Kickstarter in 2012 and coming to the rest of the world in September via Dark Horse Comics, *Leaving Megapolis* not only reunites Simone and Calafiore, but takes a set of near-iconic superheroes and breaks them down even further. There's no shortage of extreme superhero deconstructions – Mark Waid (who provides the foreword)'s *Irredeemable* and *Incorruptible*, and Peter Tomasi's *The Mighty* being two of the most recent hits – but *Leaving Megapolis* shifts the perspective to the human survivors of an otherworldly catastrophe that leaves the city's superhumans embarking on a sadistic kill frenzy while the terrifying populace scramble around in the ruins.

Like Zack Snyder's *Dawn Of The Dead*, it opens with survivors stumbling on a cop, Mina Rios, who reluctantly takes on a leadership role. As they bicker over directions and flinch at every sound on their slow crawl across their broken hometown,



the book's creative DNA has far more in common with *The Walking Dead* than anything in tights, and that first superhero attack – a gaunt, leering Flash-like figure called Fleet – is no less shocking than a walker with a jaw-full of supporting character.

Tension is high throughout. That the demands of a Kickstarter project are significantly less than a monthly has an obvious impact on the art and Calafiore brings his precise lines and humanism to some incredible splash pages and cleverly constructed action scenes that really bring home the power differential between our POV characters and the fallen heroes of Megapolis, all distant sonic booms and shadows through the clouds. As with his *Secret Six* work, he's a master of facial expressions, offering up shades of anger, resentment, shock and fear – Mina especially echoing the silent rage of Scandal Savage as she watches events unfold, often powerless to resist.

The plot perhaps isn't as sophisticated as it could be – *Leaving Megapolis* is essentially a journey from A to B – but the world-building is incredible, the ersatz DC and Marvel characters as convincingly constructed as anything from Kurt Busiek's *Astro City*, Dwayne McDuffie's *Icon* or Alan Moore-era *Supreme*.

James Hoare

VERDICT ★★★★★

"SHARES MORE WITH THE WALKING DEAD THAN ANYTHING IN TIGHTS"



60 SECONDS WITH

Chris Ryall



As editor, you've presided over the longest-running US Judge Dredd strip ever. What's the secret? It's really no secret: caring about the property and

pairing a good writer with a good artist and telling good stories – the widely known secret of all comics. Which isn't to denigrate the *Dredd* comics that came before, or to say we're infallible – you never know what's going to work for people, and almost everyone approaches these things with the best intentions. But I really thought [writer] Duane Swierczynski was the right person for this job, and that's nicely proven out in his stories – action-packed stories with some satire, some humour, some ass-kicking, and an appreciation – but not a slavish reverence – for the efforts of [creator John] Wagner and company.

"WE DIDN'T WANT TO BRING IN THE DARK JUDGES TOO SOON"

Introducing your own Dark Judges is bold. Where did the idea come from?

That's all Duane. We didn't want to bring in the Dark Judges too soon, because that seems like the move everyone expected. Rather, we told shorter stories that readers will now see were actually quite cleverly connected and telling one massive 20 (and counting)-part tale. Just retreading the Dark Judges didn't seem interesting though, and I loved the boldness of creating nine new Dark Judges, especially since they're not going any time soon.

Does it feel like you've earned yourselves a lot more freedom?

I feel like every month, we strive to earn readers' continued trust in us. It does feel that people have a sense that we're not going to wreck their beloved character. But we're not going to abuse that and start going silly, slapstick or changing directions. Rather, when I look back over the past two years, it's a source of pride for me that we've not only reached 20 issues of the main series (and counting), but also paired *Dredd* with *Mars Attacks!*, visited Mega-City Two, told a good *Year One* tale, given Anderson her own miniseries and brought back some great past *Dredd* works in nice editions. Not a bad start.



Judge Dredd and *Judge Dredd: Mega-City Two* are ongoing from IDW. Get them from all good comic shops or digitally from Comixology.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Irredeemable
Mark Waid/Peter Krause
If Superman went insane then the world would pay for it just as dearly.



I'VE NEVER
EXPERIENCED THIS
AS...AS A HUMAN
BEFORE.

MADemoiselle?



PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Diving into the Green with Swamp Thing scribe Charles Soule WORDS JOSH WEST



© Seth Kuchner

Charles Soule's name might not be uttered with the same revered whisper as Alan Moore or Scott Snyder, but it's taking on a similar tone. One of the biggest up-and-coming writers at both DC and Marvel, Soule is currently protecting the legacy of *Superman/Wonder Woman*, *She-Hulk*, *Red Lanterns*, *Thunderbolts* and, of course, the legendary *Swamp Thing*. As Soule begins to tear apart and rebuild the Green and everything around it, he discusses his career path and what's on the horizon for Dr Alec Holland...

How have you found the transition between creator-owned work and writing for characters with such a rich legacy behind them?

It's been fascinating. Working on one of the big company-owned characters is a different process to working on one of your own. Creator-owned work gives you immense freedom, but company-owned characters give you that legacy, which is a very powerful thing. It means, in some ways at least, that you don't have to do as much of the heavy lifting of introducing a character to readers, but at the same time it means there's a lot of expectation on your version of the character. People want to see something that is at least analogous of what they've seen before.

There is also a sense of not screwing it up, right? My first gig at DC was *Swamp Thing*, and that is a book that has had some of the best writers in comics on it, from Alan Moore up to Scott Snyder. There's a sense of wanting to prove that I deserve to be in such august company. Then there's a book like *Superman/Wonder Woman*, which is dealing with two of the largest icons in pop-culture. When you've been handed the reins to them you want to make sure that you add something to them, but also protect them to a certain extent and keep that legacy safe – you don't want to be the person that ends their stories forever.

You have dealt in the supernatural with your indie work. Was *Swamp Thing* your first-choice DC book?

Generally speaking, when it's your first book, they come to you and you're just thrilled to be allowed to play at that table. The funny thing, though, is that *Swamp Thing* would have been one of my first choices. I was invited about a year and a half ago to pitch on it because Scott was leaving, and it's hard to imagine what better fit at DC Comics for me there would have been at that point.

I like writing supernatural stories, I love the Swamp Thing character – I've read virtually everything up to this point – so it was a lucky coincidence that I was

offered the one that I felt like I could hit a home run with right off the bat.

Even since the dawn of the New 52, *Swamp Thing* has been allowed to play in its own corner of the DC universe. Do you think this adds more freedom or pressure when building story arcs?

I think it's both. Generally speaking, *Swamp Thing* has been off in its own slightly supernatural corner of the DC universe ever since its inception. It means you're able to tell stories that don't necessarily have to have superhero guest stars or supervillains in the traditional sense, which gives you a lot of freedom. On the other hand, it does mean you have to sink or swim on your own and find interesting stories with them on their own merits, because you don't have the larger ongoing stories to rely on. That's not to say I don't have access to those; Superman appeared in my first issue, as did the Scarecrow, and Aquaman is appearing in issue 32, which is a really fun, cool issue. That's one of the great things about working in a shared universe: you can pluck people from all over the place.

What's your favourite cameo so far?

In issues 22 and 23 I wrote a two-part story called 'The Whisky Tree', and that involved Swamp Thing teaming

“WITH SWAMP THING YOU’RE ABLE TO TELL STORIES THAT DON’T HAVE TO HAVE SUPERHERO GUEST STARS OR SUPERVILLAINS”
CHARLES SOULE



Soule has relished the independence offered by the *Swamp Thing* title.

up with John Constantine to deal with a tree in the Scottish Highlands that was dispensing devil whisky. I got to write a Constantine story and have my taste of the character, but then I wasn't necessarily the guy that has to shoulder the heavy burden of writing his character from month to month.

How well do you think *Swamp Thing* and his supporting cast would make the transition to TV and/or film?

It's funny, because Swamp Thing might not be as prominent as someone like Batman, but he's been around. There's been a cartoon and several movies, but I think if he was handled now it would depend on the take and execution. The last I heard was that there was some consideration for him being included in a *Justice League: Dark* type film – and that's based on no inside knowledge – but I think that would be great. You'd use him as a character that would play off of Constantine or Zatanna, and it could be fantastic. It depends on how it is handled and if it is handled respectfully.

In your latest arc you introduced the Serene and left Dr Alec Holland in something of a bad spot. Will this deter him from wanting to shake off his *Swamp Thing* form and return to being human in the future, or is that struggle the thing that drives a good *Swamp Thing* story?

I think it is a crucial part of the *Swamp Thing* mythology, that this is a person that has varying degrees of acceptance with the fact that he's been stuck in a plant body. It's almost like an alcoholic or an addict who has been clean for years, and then they find themselves in the right situation, and boom, they fall back into old habits. Alec has basically come to a place where he's had enough adventures to feel comfortable with the idea that he was going to be like this forever, and then this strange cult shows up and says, "We have this special remedy that can put you back in a human body for a little while," and he jumped at the chance. I think anybody would – it's a very human response to not think it through and to just do it immediately. Obviously, things don't go to plan – the Serene make off with his Swamp Thing body, and he's trapped in a human body that is dying minute by minute.

One of the things I really enjoy about *Swamp Thing* is adding things to the mythology. Adding the Serene as these helpers to the Swamp Things, that can help them handle the transition from human to avatar, these

just seem like things that would make sense, and would exist for an avatar. ☞



Swamp Thing is ongoing from DC Comics, pick up the latest issue from your nearest comic store or digitally via Comixology.

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DOCTOR WHO'S LOST EPISODE

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WHO YA GONNA CALL?

WHY GHOSTBUSTERS STILL RULES 30 YEARS ON **122**

AN IMAGINE
MONTHLY



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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

DESPITE BEING THE UK'S MOST ENDURING SCI-FI EXPORT, IT REMAINS A SAD FACT THAT MUCH OF THE SHOW HAS BEEN LOST TO THE AGES, PERHAPS FOREVER. HERE, WE DETAIL WHICH EPISODES HAVE FALLEN OFF THE RADAR AND WHETHER WE MIGHT SEE THEM ONCE AGAIN IN THEIR COMPLETE FORM...

WORDS CHARLES NORTON ILLUSTRATIONS DARYL JOYCE

At the time of writing, 97 episodes* of *Doctor Who* are either wholly or partially missing from the BBC archives. These are episodes that (for the most part) you can't watch on DVD and, barring any much-hoped for miracles, you will never see again.

During the Sixties and early Seventies, each episode was broadcast from a single master videotape, prepared by the show's production team. In fact, to this day that remains the mode of broadcast. However, up until the late Seventies, these videotapes were never archived. Instead, they would be returned to the BBC's engineering department to be reused by other programmes. For many shows (like *Z Cars*), there was only ever one master-copy of each episode. Once it was gone, it was gone forever. *Doctor Who* was a little more fortunate than other series, but not by much.

Between 1963 (when the series began) and 1973, the BBC would routinely make a copy of each episode of *Doctor Who* in order to distribute prints to the many overseas television channels who also broadcast the show. These overseas copies were made on 16mm black-and-white film by BBC Enterprises, the wing of the BBC that dealt with programme marketing.

However, in the Seventies, the BBC Enterprises film store (at Villiers House in west London) had a problem: they were running out of shelf-space. The small building was packed full with film prints of hundreds – if not thousands – of BBC television programmes, with more coming in every week. A lot of these 'telerecordings' hadn't been screened on UK television for years, and many overseas broadcasters no longer had any immediate interest in them. In a bold new world of higher-definition colour television,

these ageing black-and-white film recordings were not really seen as very important anymore. In any case, the BBC was contractually prohibited from repeating many of them.

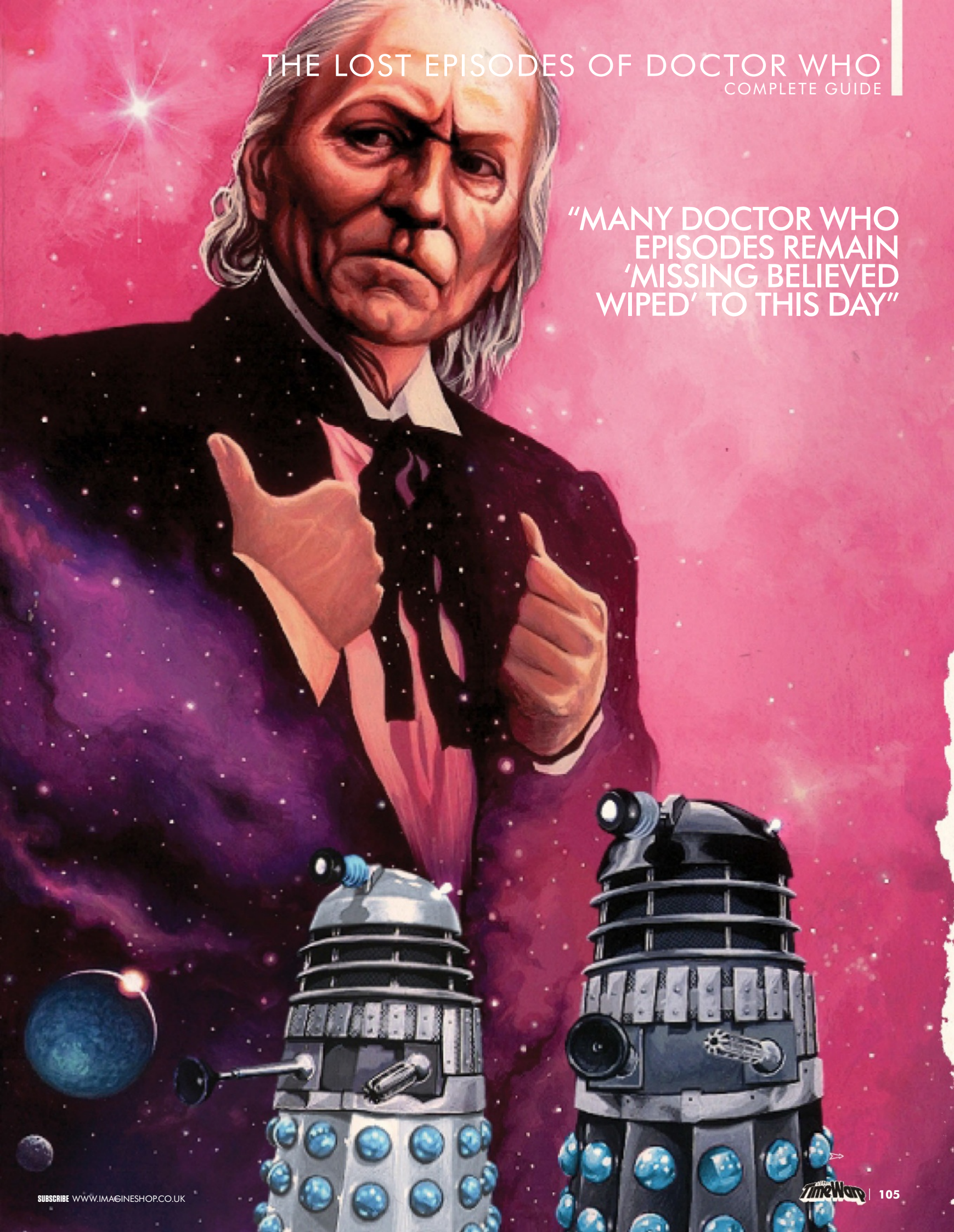
It wasn't until the late Seventies that the BBC finally set up its first permanent film and videotape archive. However, it came too late for the cans of film that BBC Enterprises had already junked, as the previously cluttered corridors of the film store at Villiers House had been brutally 'tidied'. Hundreds of programmes had been junked – destroyed forever.

Many *Doctor Who* episodes remain 'missing believed wiped' to this day, this tragedy cutting most deeply into the final two(ish, that first revolutionary regeneration occurred only two stories into Series Four) seasons of the First Doctor (William Hartnell) and the first two(ish) seasons of Patrick Troughton.

THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

COMPLETE GUIDE

"MANY DOCTOR WHO
EPISODES REMAIN
'MISSING BELIEVED
WIPE'D' TO THIS DAY"



THE MISSING EPISODES ARE...

MARCO POLO (7 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan

UK broadcast:

22 February – 4 April 1964

Last overseas broadcast:

21 January – 4 May 1971 (on ETS Television in Ethiopia)

Story

The Doctor and his friends travel to the court of the great Chinese ruler Kublai Khan, facing Mongol warlords and roaming bandits along the way.

What survives?

Off-air audio recordings survive of all seven episodes, along with a fairly comprehensive set of off-screen photographs. The audio is available on CD as part of *The Lost Episodes: Collection One*.

Destroyed

Circa 1972.

THE REIGN OF TERROR (6 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Susan

UK broadcast

8 August – 12 September 1964



Last overseas broadcast

1 July – 5 August 1971 (on ETS Television in Ethiopia)

Story

The TARDIS arrives in France during the French Revolution, where a group of anti-revolutionaries are attempting to undermine the country's brutal new regime.

What survives?

Episodes one, two, three and six survive as film recordings in the BBC archives. They were digitally remastered in 2012 and released on BBC DVD in 2013 with animated reconstructions. In addition, around ten seconds (from episode four) and 11 seconds (from episode five) of very poor-quality film also exists (on the *Lost In Time* DVD). A complete set of off-air audio recordings survives, and was made available on CD as part of *The Lost Episodes: Collection One*.

Destroyed

The last known copies of episodes four and five of this story were destroyed in a shell attack on the film archive of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation during the 1974 Turkish invasion of the island. The BBC had

previously destroyed its only remaining film prints in 1972.



THE CRUSADE (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Ian, Barbara and Vicki

UK broadcast

27 March – 17 April 1965

Last overseas broadcast

5 – 26 January 1972 (on ETS in Ethiopia)

Story

King Richard the Lionheart has a plan that will bring an end to many years of bloody conflict in the Middle East. When this is thwarted, suspicion falls upon a newly arrived stranger at his court: the Doctor.

What survives?

Complete film prints survive of both episodes one and three. These were released on *Lost In Time* from BBC DVD in 2004, along with off-air audio recordings, which also appear on CD as part of *The Lost Episodes: Collection One*. A fairly comprehensive set of off-screen photographs and film of the final 21 seconds of episode four also survives.



Only bits and pieces of serials like 'The Macra Terror' survive today.

THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

COMPLETE GUIDE

Many of the show's lost episodes were from the Patrick Troughton era.



Former companions Frazer Hines and Deborah Watling after the rediscovery of the 'Web Of Fear' and 'Enemy Of The World' serials.

LOST & FOUND

By the end of 1978, 139 episodes of *Doctor Who* were 'missing' from the BBC archives.

Happily, in the years since then, copies of many of these lost 139 have resurfaced. Archivists and fans have scoured film archives and private collections all over the globe while searching for otherwise lost episodes.

Today, an impressive 42 previously missing episodes have been rediscovered, together with an array of short film extracts...

1978

The War Machines: episode two

Returned to the BBC via an Australian film collector.

1978

The Web Of Fear: episode one

Rescued from imminent destruction at the hands of the BBC's sales division.

1981

Death To The Daleks: episode one

Found as a tape recording by BBC Canada.

Destroyed

Circa 1972.



GALAXY 4 (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Vicki and Steven

UK broadcast

11 August – 2 October 1965

Last overseas broadcast

9 – 30 October 1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

The Draivins and the Rills are locked in a desperate war for survival on the barren surface of a doomed planet. When the Doctor arrives, he is soon drawn into the fray.

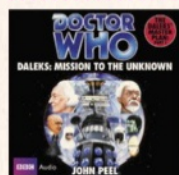
What survives?

A nearly complete film print of episode three exists, as do around six minutes of episode one (constituting about a quarter of the episode). Complete off-air audio recordings for all four episodes also survive. In 2013, all of the surviving film material was released on *The Aztecs: Special Edition* BBC DVD as part of a special reconstruction of the story, including an edited presentation of the existing soundtrack. A complete and unedited version of the story's audio was released on BBC CD as part of *The Lost Episodes: Collection One*.

"THE BBC DESTROYED ITS ONLY REMAINING FILM PRINTS OF 'GALAXY 4' IN 1976"

Destroyed

The BBC destroyed its only remaining film prints of 'Galaxy 4' in 1976. However, it's probable that for quite some time after this, additional prints were retained by SLTV in Sierra Leone. In 1999, the country's main film store was destroyed in a fire. The 'Galaxy 4' prints are believed to have perished in the blaze.



MISSION TO THE UNKNOWN (25 MINUTES)

UK broadcast

9 October 1965

Last overseas broadcast:

None

Story

On the jungle planet of Kembel, the survivors of a crashed spaceship discover a group of hostile aliens planning to conquer the galaxy. No Doctor and no companions – imagine that today.

What survives?

Not a single frame of film is known to exist from this episode. However, a complete off-air audio recording does survive, having been released on CD in 2001, and the complete audiobook was made available on CD in 2010.

Destroyed

July 1974.

THE MYTH MAKERS (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Vicki and Steven

UK broadcast

16 October – 6 November 1965

Last overseas broadcast

6 – 27 November 1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

Separated from his friends, the Doctor finds himself embroiled in the final days of the Trojan War.

What survives?

21 seconds of film survives from episode one, alongside 20 seconds from episode two and 15 seconds from episode four, which is collected on *Lost In Time*. However,



A number of episodes containing early appearances of the Cybermen remain lost.

➤ the quality of this film is exceptionally poor, and far below broadcast standard. A complete set of audio recordings also exists on CD as part of *The Lost Episodes: Collection One*.

Destroyed

Circa 1999. See 'Galaxy 4'.



THE DALEKS' MASTERPLAN (11 X 25 MINUTES)*

First Doctor, Steven and Sara

UK broadcast:

13 November 1965 – 29 January 1966

Last overseas broadcast:

None. This set of episodes was only screened in the UK, although the possibility of transmission in Australia was considered.

Story

The Daleks have succeeded in gathering together the elements they need to build the most powerful weapon in the universe. The galaxy stands on the brink of imminent destruction – until the Doctor arrives.

What survives?

Film prints of episodes two, five and nine (technically, episode ten was broadcast in the UK, but marketed as episode nine) survive in the BBC archive. In addition to this, one minute and 43 seconds of film survives from episode one, as well as one minute, 38 seconds from episode three and 58 seconds from episode four. All of this film material was released on *Lost In Time*, while surviving off-air audio recordings of the story came out on CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Two*.

*There were 18 very tightly linked episodes in *Doctor Who's* third season. Each of these 18 individual episodes followed on from the other – one leading into the next. However, they also break up into discreet blocks.

There is a single episode Dalek tale without the Doctor, followed by four episodes set in ancient Troy and then another block of six episodes that pick up from the first Dalek episode. We then have a single episode Christmas special that has

no connection to the others at all, before the narrative is wrapped up with another five Dalek episodes. Even though the Christmas special ('The Feast Of Steven') is an entirely standalone episode, it is usually taken together along with the two blocks of Dalek episodes that surround it ('The Daleks' Masterplan').

The Troy episodes ('The Myth Makers') and the opening Dalek episode ('Mission To The Unknown') are usually

treated as individual stories, which is a bit odd really, as they're both far more integral to the season's narrative than the Christmas episode. The result of this is that 'The Daleks' Masterplan' is usually regarded as a 12-episode story, starting after 'The Myth Makers' and including 'The Feast of Steven'.

However, when the story was sold to overseas television, it was actually marketed as 11 episodes, skipping the Christmas episode altogether.



'The Web Of Fear' marked the first appearance of enduring ally Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart.

THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

COMPLETE GUIDE

Destroyed:

Circa 1974.

THE FEAST OF STEVEN (25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Steven and Sara

UK broadcast

25 December 1965

Last overseas broadcast

None.

Story

On the run from the Daleks, the Doctor and his two companions arrive at a Merseyside police station on Christmas Day.

What survives?

A complete audio recording was released on CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Two*. Additionally, 20 off-screen photographs have also survived. However, no copies appear to have ever been made of the one and only mastertape, so it looks like this one really has gone forever.

Destroyed

17 August 1967.

THE MASSACRE OF ST BARTHOLOMEW'S EVE (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor and Steven

UK broadcast

5 – 26 February 1966

Last overseas broadcast

4 December 1972 – 1 January 1973 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

"THE FINAL EPISODE OF LOST IN TIME EXISTS AS A FILM RECORDING"

Story

During one of the bloodiest periods in France's history, the Doctor is seen conspiring with sinister forces behind the throne, but is it the real Doctor at all?

What survives?

A complete audio recording of this episode was released on CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Two*. This is the last *Doctor Who* story for which not a single frame of broadcast footage is known to exist in any form.

Destroyed

Circa 1999. See 'Galaxy 4'.

THE CELESTIAL TOYMAKER (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Steven and Dodo

UK broadcast

2 – 23 April 1966

Last overseas broadcast

5 – 26 February 1973 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

The Doctor suddenly vanishes from inside the TARDIS as the time machine is drawn off course by a powerful being known only as the Toymaker.

What survives?

Thanks to a clerical error, the final episode of this story still exists as a film recording, and was released on the *Lost In Time* DVD. The first three episodes are only currently known to survive as audio recordings. An audio-only CD is available as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Two*.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1999. See 'Galaxy 4'.

THE SAVAGES (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Steven and Dodo

UK broadcast

28 May – 18 June 1966

Last overseas broadcast

February/March 1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

The Doctor and his friends attempt to put an end to a programme of obscene experimentation that is being conducted on a primitive people.

What survives?

Around eight seconds of very poor-quality film exists from episode three, with another 36 seconds of similar material also surviving from episode four. This footage was released on the *Lost In Time* DVD,

1982

The Abominable

Snowmen: episode two

Discovered in a haul of prints belonging to a BBC film editor.

1982

The Reign Of Terror: episode six

Returned by a collector after an appeal in *Doctor Who Monthly* magazine.

1983

Invasion Of The Dinosaurs: episode one

Returned by a fan, who had been holding onto it in the hope of finding more episodes.

1983

The Daleks'

Masterplan: episodes five and ten

Reportedly found in the basement of a Mormon church in south London.

1984

The Celestial Toymaker: episode four

An accidental survivor of an otherwise comprehensive film purge in Australia.

1984

The Wheel In Space: episode three

Purchased from a Southampton film collector.

1984

The Reign Of Terror: episodes one, two and three

Found to still be in the archives of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation.

1985

The Time Meddler: episodes one, three and four/The War Machines: episodes one, three and four

Copies of two incomplete serials found in Nigeria.

1987

The Faceless Ones: episode three/Evil Of The Daleks: episode two

Found at a car-boot sale in Buckinghamshire in 1983.

1988

The Ice Warriors:

Episodes one, four, five and six

Discovered in mislabelled film cans when clearing out a BBC building.



Two episodes of 'The Reign Of Terror' - one of the Hartnell era's purely historical stories - are still lost.

→ while the full audio can be found as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Two*. In addition, off-screen photographs also exist from all four episodes.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1999. See 'Galaxy 4'.



THE SMUGGLERS (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Polly and Ben

UK broadcast

10 September – 1 October 1966

Last overseas broadcast

1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

When London secretary Polly Wright and able seaman Ben Jackson stumble into the TARDIS, they soon find themselves transported to 18th Century Cornwall, where they meet the villainous Captain Pike.

What survives?

23 seconds of film survives from episode one; 21 seconds from episode three and three seconds from episode four. These sections of film can be found on the *Lost In Time* DVD. The unedited soundtrack was released on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Three*. A representative collection of off-screen photos has also survived from all four episodes.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1999. See 'Galaxy 4'.



THE TENTH PLANET (4 X 25 MINUTES)

First Doctor, Second Doc, Polly and Ben

UK broadcast

8 – 29 October 1966

Last overseas broadcast

1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

A new planet suddenly appears in space, with land masses closely resembling those

of Earth. Meanwhile, at a scientific base near the South Pole, strange silver figures are seen approaching through the snow.

What survives?

The first three episodes of this story survive as complete film prints and an audio recording also exists of the story's fourth episode. Episode four was released as a fully animated reconstruction for the story's 2013 DVD release. Additionally, one minute and 21 seconds of film (of variable quality) exists from episode four, together with some off-screen photographs, which can also be found on the 2013 DVD.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.



THE POWER OF THE DALEKS (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Polly and Ben

UK broadcast

5 November – 10 December 1966

Last overseas broadcast

1972 (on RTS Television in Singapore)

Story

On the planet Vulcan, a strange man claiming to be the Doctor investigates a mysterious alien capsule and meets its frightening occupants.

What survives?

53 seconds of film (of variable quality) survives from episode one, and 24 seconds from episode two. 31 seconds from episode four, 58 seconds from Episode Five and six seconds from Episode Six also exist. These clips were released on DVD with *Lost In Time* and *Genesis Of The Daleks*. The only complete recording of the programme is an off-air audio (available on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Three*). A large number of off-screen images also exist.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE HIGHLANDERS (4 X 25 MINUTES)



Astrid (Mary Peach) in 'Enemy Of The World'.



"THE FIRST THREE EPISODES OF THE TENTH PLANET SURVIVE AS FILM PRINTS"



WHO'S OF THE WORLD (1963-1980)

Though the BBC's own archive copies of early Doctor Who serials were often destroyed or lost, most were converted into 16mm film and sold to overseas broadcasters - largely countries within the then-British Commonwealth - between the show's broadcast and 1980. The First Doctor episodes found themselves sold to

34 countries, while the Second Doctor was shown in only eight. However, it wasn't just as simple as 'broadcast it and send it back' due to the practice of 'bicycling', where one country would send their prints to the next country along in the list. This way, *Doctor Who* worked up nearly as many air miles as its hero, but the precise whereabouts of each tape

- as well as its quality - wasn't being tracked. One hope for fans is Zambia. The end of the 'bicycling' chain for Africa - and the only African country to purchase Patrick Troughton-era episodes, rumours regularly surface about film canisters being discovered in the dusty backrooms of ZTV. Frankly, we'll believe it when we see it.

THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

COMPLETE GUIDE



Anneke Wills and Michael Craze were the first companions for the Second Doctor, starring in some of his best known missing stories.

➤ Second Doctor, Polly, Ben and Jamie
UK broadcast

17 December 1966 – 7 January 1967

Last overseas broadcast

8 – 29 April 1970 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

The Doctor meets a new friend – a highlander fleeing the battlefield of Culloden.

What survives?

13 seconds survive from the opening episode, and can be found on the *Lost In Time* DVD. An off-air soundtrack appears in *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Three*. Off-screen photographs also survive.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE UNDERWATER MENACE (4 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Polly, Ben and Jamie

UK broadcast

14 January – 4 February 1967

Last overseas broadcast

6 – 27 May 1970 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

The brilliant (but insane) Professor Zaroff has grand plans to raise the lost city of Atlantis from the depths of the oceans, but at a dreadful price.

What survives?

Film prints survive of episodes two and three. 14 seconds of episode one and three seconds of episode four also exist on film. An unedited soundtrack featuring all four episodes appears as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Three* CD set. A DVD release is planned for later this year.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.



THE MOONBASE (4 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Polly, Ben and Jamie

UK broadcast

11 February – 4 March 1967

Last overseas broadcast

10 June – 1 July 1970 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

A weather-control centre on the Moon is hit by an alien plague, and the Doctor has only a limited amount of time to find the cause.

What survives?

Film recordings survive of episodes two and four, as well as audio recordings of one and three (on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Three*). These were recreated in animated form for the story's 2014 DVD release, and off-air photographs also survive.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.



THE MACRA TERROR (4 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Polly, Ben and Jamie

UK broadcast

11 May – 1 April 1967

Last overseas broadcast

8 – 29 July 1970 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

The Doctor visits an oppressed alien mining colony under the dictatorship of a much-loved autocrat. However, all is not as

it seems, and the colony's true rulers are emerging – the Macra are coming.

What survives?

26 seconds of episode two and 54 seconds of episode three survive as extracts of (on *Lost In Time*). A remastered soundtrack CD featuring all four episodes with linking narration from Anneke Wills was released as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Four*. Off-air photographs also survive.

Believed destroyed

1974.

THE FACELESS ONES (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Polly, Ben and Jamie

UK broadcast

8 April – 14 May 1967

Last overseas broadcast

11 June – 16 July 1973 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

An alarming number of young holiday-makers are disappearing shortly after boarding a flight organised by the mysterious Chameleon Tours.

What survives?

Film recordings of episodes one and three were released on *Lost In Time*. Additionally, a three-second film clip exists from episode two (also on the DVD) and off-air audio for all six episodes were issued on CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Four*. Off-screen photographs also survive.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE EVIL OF THE DALEKS (7 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Victoria

UK broadcast ➤

1991

The Daleks' Masterplan: episode one (excerpts)

Nearly two minutes of footage found at the BBC in an incorrectly labelled film can.

1991

The Tomb Of The Cybermen: all four episodes

Returned from a TV station in Hong Kong and rush-released by BBC Video.

1993

The Power Of The Daleks: episode six (excerpt)/The Abominable Snowmen: episode four (excerpts)/The Daleks' Masterplan: episode three (excerpt)

Tiny clips found, during the research for a *Doctor Who* documentary.

1995

The Power Of The Daleks: episodes four and five (excerpts)

A few seconds found in Australia, reused in another programme.

1996

The Smugglers: Episodes one, three and four/The Highlanders: episode one/The Underwater Menace: episodes one, two and four/The Macra Terror: episodes two and three/Fury From The Deep: episodes two, four and five/The Wheel in Space: episode four (all excerpts)

Short pieces of film held by the Australian government television censor.

1998

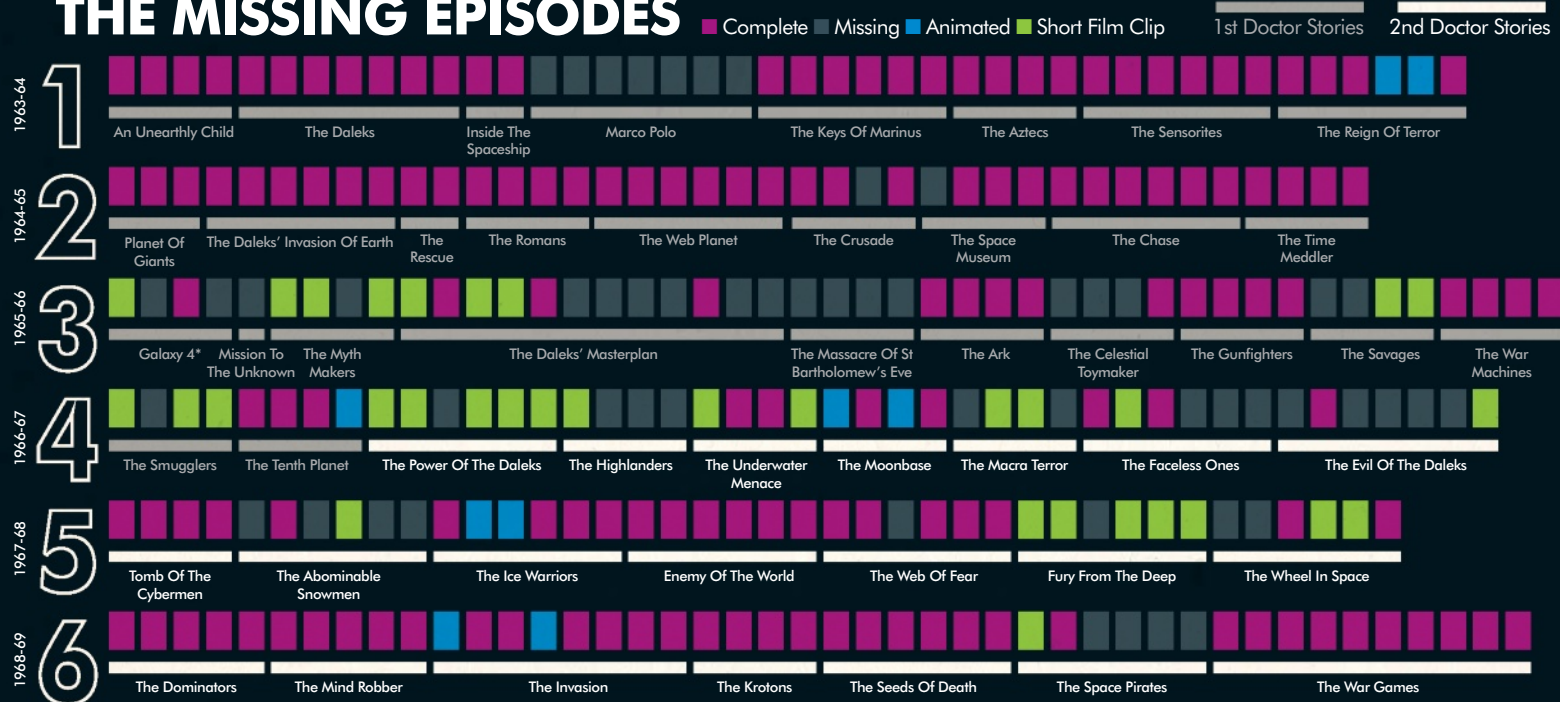
Galaxy 4: episode one (excerpt)

Film left over from a 1977 *Doctor Who* documentary, kept by a fan.

1998

The Reign Of Terror: episodes four and five/Galaxy 4: episode one/The Myth Makers: episodes one, two, three and four/The Savages: episodes three and four/The Tenth Planet: episode four/The Power Of The Daleks: episodes one and two/The Macra Terror: episode three/

THE MISSING EPISODES



Will we ever see the complete likes of 'The Myth Makers' again?

➤ 20 May – 1 July 1967 (Repeated: 8 June – 3 August 1968)

Last overseas broadcast

4 September – 16 October 1970 (on NZBC Television in New Zealand)

Story

The TARDIS has been stolen and the Doctor must go to Victorian London to get it back, where an old enemy waits for him.

What survives?

A complete film recording survives of episode two, and was released through the *Lost In Time* DVD. Unedited audio recordings for all seven episodes also exist, and were released on CD with *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Four*. Off-screen photographs survive as well.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Victoria

UK broadcast

30 September – 4 November 1967

Last overseas broadcast

Late 1974 (on RKTU Television in Nigeria)

Story

Professor Travers is in Tibet on the trail of the mythical Yeti. However, when he finds it, it is unlike anything he had expected.

What survives?

A film print exists of episode two, together with eight seconds of film from episode four, both available on *Lost In Time*. Audio recordings of all six episodes appeared on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Four* CD

box set, and off-screen photographs survive covering the whole serial.

Believed destroyed

Unknown.

THE ICE WARRIORS (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Victoria

UK broadcast

11 November – 16

December 1967

Last overseas broadcast

3 September – 8 October 1973 (on ZNBC Television in Lusaka, Zambia)

Story

A prehistoric body, found frozen in an ice cap, is thawed out at a scientific base. However, it transpires that the body isn't quite as dead as it had seemed.

What survives?

Complete film prints of episodes one, four, five and six were released on DVD last year, along with a fully animated reconstruction of episodes two and three based on surviving off-air audio recordings (also on CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Five*). A good number of off-screen photographs from both missing episodes also made it onto the DVD.

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE WEB OF FEAR (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Victoria

THE LOST EPISODES OF DOCTOR WHO

COMPLETE GUIDE



Until 1988, 'The Ice Warriors' was believed lost.

UK broadcast

3 February – 9 March 1968

Last overseas broadcast

1974/75 (on RKTU in Nigeria)

Story

A strange, web-like substance is spreading through the London Underground, and a new form of Yeti is patrolling the abandoned tunnels.

What survives?

Only an audio recording and set of off-screen photographs are known to exist from episode three. The rest remains intact, and was included on February's DVD release of the story. Meanwhile, the audio appears on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Five*.

Believed destroyed

Unknown.

FURY FROM THE DEEP (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Victoria

UK broadcast

16 March – 20 April 1968

Last overseas broadcast

8 October – 10 November 1973 (on GBC Television in Gibraltar)

Story

A group of gas refinery rigs off the coast of Britain awaken something alien deep beneath the sea.

What survives?

In addition to a complete audio recording (available on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Five*), there are also 19 seconds of film from episode one, 54 seconds from episode two and 31 seconds from episode five – all on *Lost In Time*.

Believed destroyed

Late 1974.

THE WHEEL IN SPACE (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe

UK broadcast

27 April – 1 June 1968

Last overseas broadcast

In the late Seventies (on RKTU in Nigeria)

Story

When strange, metallic rodents start appearing on board a space station they signal the return of another of the Doctor's deadliest enemies.

What survives?

Film recordings of episodes three and six survive, and were released on *Lost In Time*. Additionally, four seconds of film exists from episode one, three seconds from episode four and six seconds from episode five (also on the DVD). Off-air audio recordings were issued on BBC audio CD as part of *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Five*. Off-screen photographs also remain.

Believed destroyed

Unknown.

THE INVASION (8 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe

UK broadcast

2 November – 21 December 1968

Last overseas broadcast

1972 (on GBC Television in Gibraltar)

Story

International Electromatics is one of the country's biggest manufacturers of

computer components. However, the secret of their success is not entirely of this world.

What survives?

Complete film prints of episodes two, three, five, six, seven and eight were released on DVD in 2006, alongside a fully animated reconstruction of episodes one and four, based on surviving off-air audio recordings (also found on *The Lost TV Episodes: Collection Five*).

Believed destroyed

Circa 1974.

THE SPACE PIRATES (6 X 25 MINUTES)

Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe

UK broadcast

8 March – 12 April 1969

Last overseas broadcast

In the Seventies (on ZNBC in Zambia)

Story

The Doctor and his travelling companions fall foul of interstellar pirates when they arrive on an unmanned beacon drifting through space.

What survives?

One minute and 43 seconds of film survives from episode one, as well as a copy of episode two. An audio recording of the serial was issued on CD in 2003, followed by a DVD with the surviving film in 2004.

Believed destroyed

Unknown. ☹

Recently recovered Patrick Troughton stories *Doctor Who: The Enemy Of The World* and *The Web Of Fear* are both available now on DVD.

The Faceless

Ones: episode two (all excerpts)

Short clips created by pointing a ciné camera at a TV set back in the Sixties.

1999

The Crusade:

episode one 'escaped' from a New Zealand vault in the Seventies into the hands of collectors.

2002

The Web Of Fear: episodes two, four and five/The Wheel In Space: episode five (all excerpts)

Small sections of film heralding from the New Zealand State film censors.

2003

The Power Of The Daleks: episode one (excerpt)

Footage found contained within a copy of the episode's original BBC1 trailer.

2004

The Daleks' Masterplan: episode two

Rescued by a former BBC employee from a projection room in Ealing.

2004

The Space Pirates: episode one (excerpts)

Short film sections found in a BBC film can be labelled 'Dad's Army'.

2005

The Power Of The Daleks: episode four (excerpts)

Film clips discovered to have somehow been reused within an episode of another show.

2011

Galaxy 4: episode three/The Underwater Menace: episode two

Discovered in a private collection by *Radio Times* archivist Ralph Montagu.

2013

The Enemy Of The World: episodes one, two, four, five and six/The Web Of Fear: episodes two, four, five and six

Found in an African TV station, alongside additional copies of two already existing episodes.

FLASHBACK

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

IT WAS JOHN TRAVOLTA'S PET PROJECT, AND THE FIRST PART OF WHAT ITS MAKERS HOPED WOULD LEAD TO AN ENDURING SCI-FI FRANCHISE. UNFORTUNATELY, BATTLEFIELD EARTH IS NOW BEST REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST INFAMOUS BOMBS OF ALL TIME. SO WHAT WENT WRONG?

WORDS CALUM WADDELL

Perhaps more than any other genre, when people think of 'bad' movies they turn to sci-fi cinema and such staples of proverbial 'golden turkey' lists as *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (1959), *Santa Claus Conquers The Martians* (1964) and *Superman IV: The Quest For Peace* (1987).

Yet one movie towers above even these disastrous duds: *Battlefield Earth*. Released to near-universal condemnation in 2000, it found itself with a record number of Razzie wins (nine), and remains best known, rightly or wrongly, as a slice of Scientology-inspired schlock that did no favours for its leading man's career.

Spare some thought, however, for those who worked behind the camera on this catastrophic cosmic caper – including its director, the British-born Roger Christian, who had helmed the fan-favourite fear flick *The Sender* (1982) and also worked on the design of such classics as *Star Wars* (1977) and *Alien* (1979).

"At the time of *Battlefield Earth* I had just done second-unit directing on *The Phantom Menace*," begins Christian when SciFiNow catches up with him. "George Lucas had actually recommended me to Travolta, who at that time was probably one of the five biggest movie stars in the world. I also liked him – he was a very genuine man to speak to. Unfortunately, when I got the script I just didn't get it."

That, alas, was the kicker. The *Battlefield Earth* novel had been a best-selling pot-boiler from author L Ron Hubbard. Released in 1982, the book attracted some high-profile fans (Mitt Romney, the Presidential hopeful

from 2012 who liked his "binders full of women", claims it is his favourite read of all time), but like a lot of Hubbard's work, it was also seen as little more than pulpy preposterousness. One thing everyone would likely agree with, though, is that the story was not going to be an easy one to bring to the screen. Set in the year 3000, *Battlefield Earth* depicts the planet as having been under the brutal rule of a towering alien race –

"I WISH THERE COULD HAVE BEEN A SEQUEL – THE SECOND HALF OF HUBBARD'S BOOK IS INCREDIBLE"

ROGER CHRISTIAN

called the Psychlos (yes, the 'symbolic' wordplay is really this lame) – for 1,000 years. Committing genocide on humanity to the extent of wiping out 98 per cent of us, the Psychlos are exploiting Earth for its gold resources – at least until a young handsome warrior, Jonnie Goodboy Tyler, rises up to take the fight to those evil otherworldly counterparts.

"After I read the script, John and I had a few meetings," continues Christian. "But what really

changed my mind was reading the book. It was fantastic. At that point I thought this could be really interesting, and possibly a film that would be ahead of its time. Then lawyers got involved and said, 'You can't do that – you'll get killed'. The more I got told that, the more I wanted to do it. I took it on full brunt."

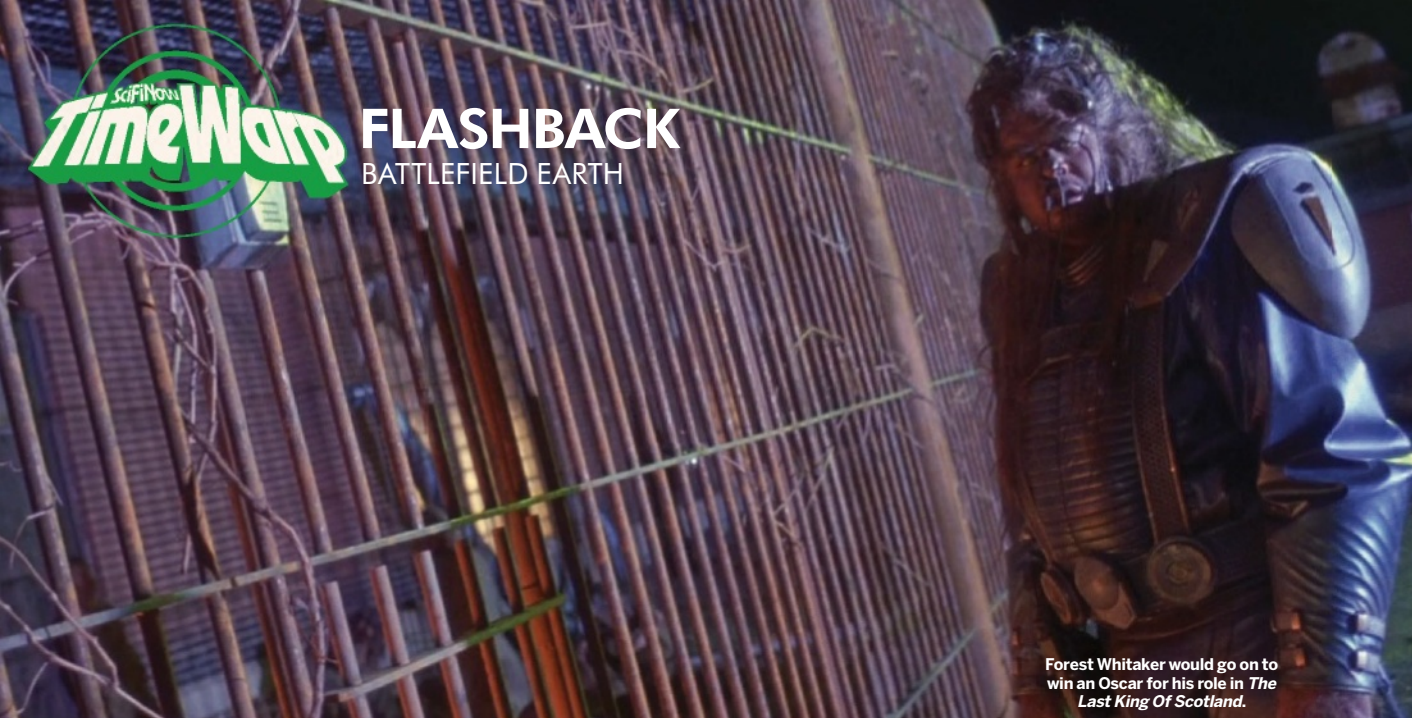
Travolta had wanted to make *Battlefield Earth* – which he also ended up producing – for almost two decades, but during the Eighties times were tough for the former *Saturday Night Fever* actor. A flurry of flops had damaged his Hollywood profile, and it wasn't until *Pulp Fiction* in 1994 that he commanded a comeback of such size that he could once again demand superstar salaries and a heavy hand over his own starring roles. Originally, Travolta had seen himself as playing Tyler, but by the end of the Nineties he was too stocky – and old – to be credibly seen as a battle-hardy lump of beefcake. As a result, Travolta agreed to be cast as Terl – the overpowering Psychlo security chief – and in the process gave himself a rare villainous turn in a career headlined, until that point, mainly by heroic performances. The role of Tyler was ultimately given to Barry Pepper, who would go on to achieve acclaim for his turn on hit television series *The Kennedys*, while the always-reliable Forest Whitaker was brought in for some snarling backup to Travolta.

In the meantime, original scripter J David Shapiro (who had penned Mel Brooks' *Robin Hood: Men In Tights*) was replaced by a jobbing writer by the name of Corey Mandell, whose *Battlefield Earth* gig would lead ➤



BATTLEFIELD EARTH

FLASHBACK



Forest Whitaker would go on to win an Oscar for his role in *The Last King Of Scotland*.



Having regained his career, this marked another career nosedive for Travolta.



Relative newcomer Barry Pepper took the lead as Jonnie Goodboy Taylor.



Is it time for viewers to give *Battlefield Earth* a reappraisal?

➤ him to immediate obscurity. Of course, the real white elephant in the room was the fact that Hubbard's name was, is, and always be synonymous with the Church of Scientology.

"The irony is that John actually made sure there were no Scientology connections to *Battlefield Earth*," adds Christian. "If you look at the book, just inside the cover Hubbard says that he knows his followers of his serious work – meaning his religion – will be disappointed with *Battlefield Earth*. But he explains that he just wanted to write a rip-roaring science fiction adventure. There is no connection in that novel to the Church of Scientology – nothing. And Travolta was very careful. I will give you an example: I wanted a composer who was a member of the church, and he did an amazing test score. I loved it. But John wouldn't have it. He said, 'No, I can't have any link to the church in this film – I'm being very careful about it.' So I couldn't even have the composer I wanted [laughs]. But for some reason there is a worldwide hatred of this religion, and I don't know why – it is just a religion. That is all it is. People have the right to choose whatever it is that gets them through life. No one criticises Tom Hanks for being a Mormon [he's now a member of the Greek Orthodox Church]; it doesn't enter into the equation. But Scientology is vilified. I told John, 'Look, I studied Buddhism, and I have my own philosophies that work for me, but I really need to know what your religion is all about.' So they took me into the heart of it, because I was well aware that we were all going to be attacked by the press."

Talk about an understatement. Not only was *Battlefield Earth* attacked in the press; it was utterly

crucified at the cinemas. Viewers who did see the film laughed in derision at the sight of Travolta as a malevolent Martian (more chucklesome than chilling), cave-dwelling slave-humans (considered incapable of intelligent thought by their new interplanetary rulers), the dark, dingy sets and the insanely designed heavy metal aliens. While *Battlefield Earth* is occasionally unintentionally endearing – such as when Travolta's character gets drunk and mumbles some laughable totalitarian-babble or goes on a cow-shooting massacre (!) – the movie's mythology rarely connects with its would-be-epic effects palette. For instance, despite having ruled Earth for a millennium, Travolta's snarling space-species admits that they have no idea what we even like to eat.

On the other hand, though, it would be tough to argue that the Hubbard adaptation really has much to do with Scientology, or with pushing the form onto its audience.

"It is interesting, because I was at the *Star Wars* Celebration conference in Orlando last year, and a writer called John Flynn came to speak to me," says Christian. "He has since reclaimed *Battlefield Earth* as a great movie, and he told me that he sent an email to Roger Ebert – before he passed away – and asked him to re-evaluate the movie. Ebert apparently said 'OK' and agreed that it was actually quite an interesting film after all. So I think there is a little re-evaluation going on."

In truth, *Battlefield Earth* is not a patch on Christian's best work in the genre – such as *The Sender* – but it does reveal a foolhardily balls-out attempt at embracing

"THE IRONY IS THAT JOHN TRAVOLTA ACTUALLY MADE SURE THERE WERE NO SCIENTOLOGY CONNECTIONS TO BATTLEFIELD EARTH"

ROGER CHRISTIAN

Hubbard's excessively odd fictional worlds on the celluloid canvas. Not that this meant the movie's controversy would end with its flop financial intake (just under \$30 million, which for a new Travolta title in the year 2000 was decidedly drab) – oh no. Instead, Franchise Pictures, a fresh production firm who backed the film financially, were forced into bankruptcy when it was found that they had inflated *Battlefield Earth*'s budget from \$44 million to almost \$75 million in order to gain revenue. In other words, when they had asked backers to 'invest' (as an example) 50 per cent of the budget, they were in fact supporting the bulk of the shooting costs.

Christian, however, came out of *Battlefield Earth* as one of its lesser casualties. Returning to the independent world, far removed from A-list egos or ambitions, the artist-turned-director continued to produce such fringe films as *American Daylight* (2004) and *Prisoners Of*



The Sun (2013). Speaking to him today, though, it is clear that he remains frustrated about *Battlefield Earth*'s continued reputation as a romp of universally panned proportions.

"If I have any regrets – and I try not to – I wish there could have been a sequel," he says. "The second half of Hubbard's book is incredible. It is just amazing. What goes on in there – the battles and stuff – are fantastic. If I had the influence, I would have done the second half to the book first. It is so good that I think it would have attracted a bigger audience. But listen – Quentin Tarantino came to the premiere of *Battlefield Earth* and said, 'Forget what the critics say – you will be attacked – but this is the sort of stuff I would like to do.' I think in a few more years people might give it another chance. You know, a science fiction film has never won an Oscar. I'm not including *Battlefield Earth* in this list, but the great science fiction films, like *2001 [A Space Odyssey]* by [Stanley] Kubrick, they didn't work at the time. When they first screened *2001* people got up and left. *Blade Runner* was a disaster when it came out. *Contact* was lambasted. We made more revenue on *Battlefield Earth* than they did on *Blade Runner*, which is surprising. But listen, I like the film. I just wish people had been more open-minded, and we could have made the second part, because *Battlefield Earth* is only the first half of a really great story." 🌱



Battlefield Earth is available on DVD, priced at £6.25.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

FLASHBACK

SCI-FI SEQUELS THAT NEVER WERE

Five other fantasy flops that never spawned an intended franchise...



BIGGER TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

John Carpenter believed that he had a ready-made series with this ingenious, *Indiana Jones*-style satire starring Kurt Russell as anti-hero Jack Burton, even ending the movie with anticipation of the next instalment. Unfortunately, confused executives at Fox marketed it as a po-faced action film, and it tanked. Badly. However, it has since been reclaimed as a cult classic.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE II

Cannon claimed that this would be the "*Star Wars* of the Eighties," but audiences weren't enticed by the prospect of seeing up-and-coming musclemen Dolph Lundgren battling baddies in his underwear. It ends with a franchise setup (Skeletor is still alive), but Cannon ultimately turned the script and sets for *Masters Of The Universe II* into Jean-Claude Van Damme's 1989 actioner *Cyborg*.



SERENITY 2

Hopes were high for the big-screen adaptation of *Firefly*, and small-screen fans were almost overwhelmingly delighted by the end result. Faithful and fantastic, *Serenity* certainly delivered – except at the box office. To put it into (depressing) perspective, *Serenity* only made \$10 million more than *Battlefield Earth* when it was released in cinemas. Ouch.



BUBBA NOSFERATU

Critics adored this comedy from Don Coscarelli, and although it was hardly destined to worry *Attack Of The Clones* at the 2002 box office, *Bubba Ho-Tep* was a certified indie-world cause célèbre thanks to a provocative performance from Bruce Campbell. News of a follow-up, *Bubba Nosferatu*, emerged, but when Campbell left the project and Ron Perlman was announced as a replacement, the geek world went green and financiers backed away.



THE SUBTLE KNIFE

New Line Cinema had struck big with *The Lord Of The Rings*, so the studio decided to dabble in another book property that could provide a string of successful Christmas capers. Regrettably, the first of Philip Pullman's critically acclaimed *His Dark Materials* trilogy *The Golden Compass* – arrived onscreen as a bloated and boring anti-blockbuster with dreary direction from Chris Weitz.



LOOK TO THE STARS

From John Scalzi to Ben Bova, British artist John Harris has been imagining sci-fi landscapes for some of the biggest names in SF...

WORDS JODIETLEY

TOWER (MICRODRIVE), 1983

The cover for Clive Sinclair's Spectrum computer manual is a wry image for an early example of increasingly miniaturised technology.

**THE TWIN PARLIAMENTS OF
PYRRHUS, 2013**

One of a series of illustrations for John Scalzi's short stories, published online under the heading of *The Human Division*. These structures are 'grown' using gene technology to create photosynthetically self-powered units.



HOTEL SCHROEDINGER, 1977

From the series *MASS* – an early commissioned collection of images – that illustrates themes of relativity, quantum mechanics, time and space.



SATURN, 2002

This view of Saturn with its rings and crown of aurora borealis rising above one of its icy moons was used to illustrate Ben Bova's 2001 novel, *Saturn*. Harris calls the phenomenon "one of the most magnificent sights within our solar system."



**QUIET NIGHT
(INSIDE
THE ROCHE
LIMIT), 1979**

An awe-inspiring painting that shows our familiar moon spiralling too close to Earth and being ripped apart by the conflicting gravitational forces – all in utter silence, while the people of the artist's hometown sleep on.



SPINDIZZY, 1977

An illustration of the lift-off by an 'Okie' city from James Blish's epic series *Cities In Flight*. In this, he posits the idea of a spinning forcefield literally wrenching an entire mining city from Earth and sending it – intact – into space.

OLD MAN'S WAR, 2005

John Scalzi's debut novel about an interstellar war between Earth and alien enemies was brought to life in vibrant detail by the space-scape John Harris. *Old Man's War* was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2006.



THE SHRINE OF THE FLAME, 1994

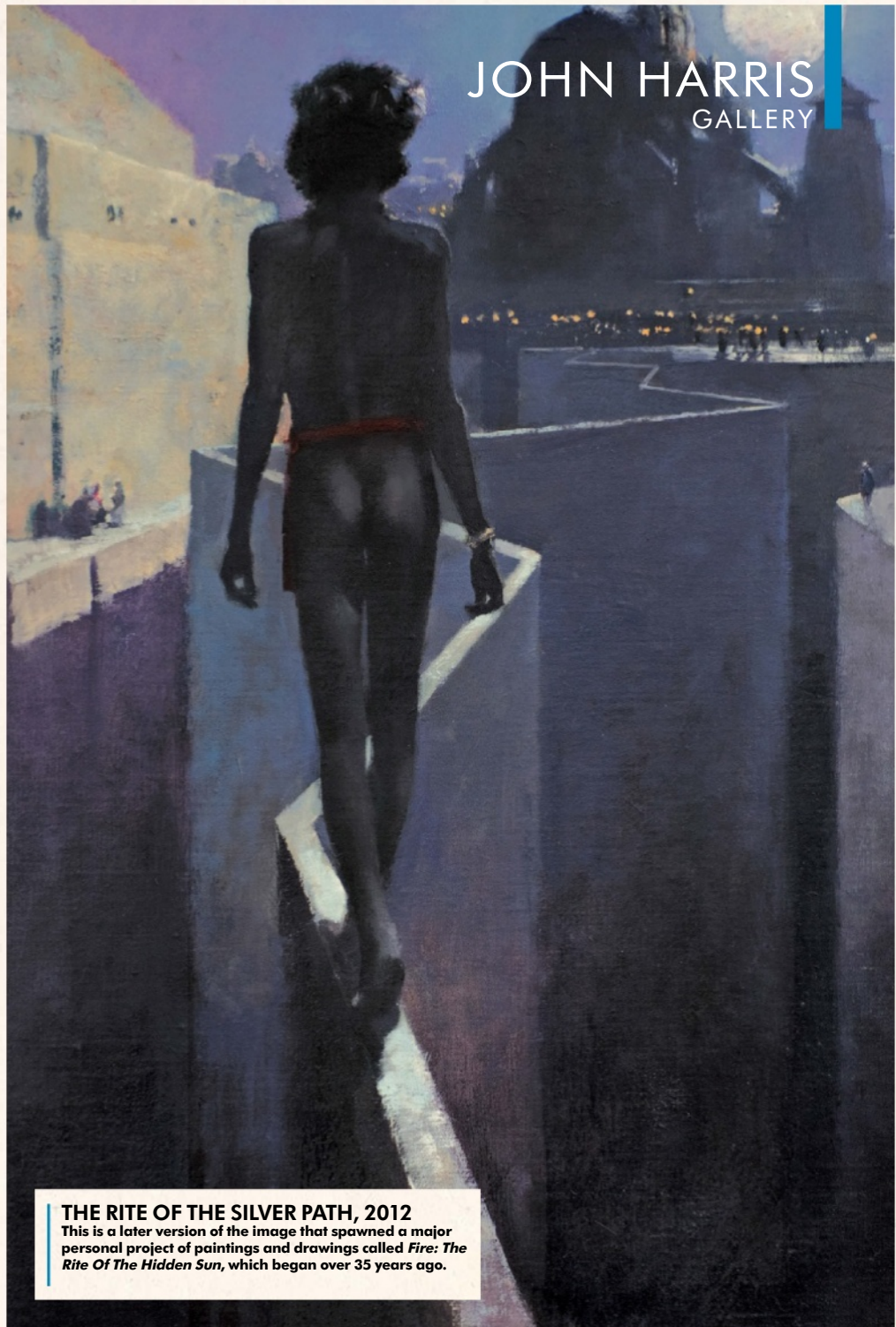
An illustration from the series *The Rite Of The Hidden Sun* that shows the destination of the girl who walks the zig-zagging wall in *The Rite Of The Silver Path*.





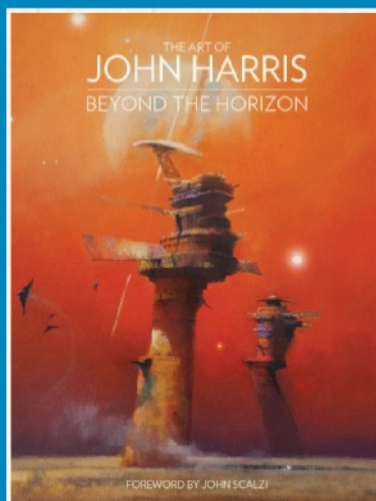
THE ROAD TO FIRE, ALONG THE WALL, 2013

An introductory piece to a suite of paintings that depicts a journey by an artist through an unknown region towards the fabled city of Fire.



THE RITE OF THE SILVER PATH, 2012

This is a later version of the image that spawned a major personal project of paintings and drawings called *Fire: The Rite Of The Hidden Sun*, which began over 35 years ago.



THE ART OF JOHN HARRIS

Visions of the future, just how the masters imagined it

Forcefields, far-out tech and futuristic cities all feature in John Harris' amazing space-scapes. Each intricately detailed painting is as epic as the stories they were used to illustrate, including novels by Ben Bova, Orson Scott Card and John Scalzi. The latter calls his work "iconic" in a heartfelt foreword to the book, *The Art Of John Harris: Beyond The Horizon*, in which the celebrated author goes on to explain the magic appeal of Harris' work: "You can see it from across a bookstore, and when you see it, you know what you're going to get in the pages of the book: a damn fine read that takes you to places you can't go any other way." This beautiful hardback features the artwork for many of these classic SF stories – a selection drawn from over 40 years worth of imagination. The artist takes us through some of his favourite pieces ahead of the book's release.

The Art Of John Harris: Beyond The Horizon is published by Titan Books on 30 May.

ARE YOU TROUBLED BY STRANGE NOISES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT? DO YOU EXPERIENCE FEELINGS OF DREAD IN YOUR BASEMENT OR ATTIC? HAVE YOU OR YOUR FAMILY EVER SEEN A SPOOK, SPECTRE OR GHOST? IF THE ANSWER IS "YES," DON'T WAIT ANOTHER MINUTE. PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL THE PROFESSIONALS...



WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

GHOSTBUSTERS



Film

RUNNING TIME:

105 minutes

RELEASE DATE:

8 June 1984

DIRECTOR:

Ivan Reitman

WRITERS: Dan Aykroyd,

Harold Ramis

CAST: Bill Murray, Dan

Aykroyd, Harold Ramis,

Sigourney Weaver, Ernie

Hudson, Rick Moranis

There are some films that are a power for good. Films that provoke contentment, nostalgia and general good cheer in even the most cynical and cold-hearted of pop-culture sponges. Films that speak of a simpler time, even if it's hard to articulate what was simpler about it. One of these films is *Ghostbusters*.

Attempting to pin down exactly what is so great about *Ghostbusters* is a tricky business. It's a star vehicle that actually makes the most of its whole cast, a summer event movie and a subversive comedy. It's a golden marketing opportunity with a heart as big as Mr Stay Puft, a product of its time and utterly timeless. Every rewatch of *Ghostbusters* creates a warm golden glow and gets belly laughs. It is all things to all people. It's just brilliant.

About

After being fired from their jobs at the university, doctors Peter Venkman, Ray Stantz and Egon Spengler decide to go into business as Ghostbusters. Using their self-designed ghost-trapping equipment, they become media sensations. However, it soon becomes clear that the reason for all their business is due to something big, and it's somehow related to new client Dana Barrett. Can the Ghostbusters beat bureaucracy to save New York from an ancient Sumerian threat and a disaster of biblical proportions? Who ya gonna call?

If we're discussing specifics, the cast seems as good a place to start as any. As the tragic passing of the great Harold Ramis reminded us, each member of the Ghostbusters is an integral part of a comedy team that has arguably never been matched.

They were a trio of comedians who were at the top of their games with material they'd created for themselves. Bill Murray is full of the bone-dry wit and cutting sarcasm that we know and love, but the Ghostbusters work so well together because they are essentially on level pegging. Their friendship is wonderfully plausible, built on in-jokes, shared history and mutual dependence. Peter Venkman (Murray) may tease Egon Spengler (Ramis) about the time he tried to drill a hole in his head, and there is the sense that the pair of them manipulate Ray Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) into mortgaging the house where he was

born ("Everybody has three mortgages nowadays"), but without their expertise and support, Peter would have to rely on his unreliable charm. They would not be able to survive in the real world without each other, and we know that they've tried. "You've never been out of college," says Ray. "I've worked in the private sector. They expect results."

Their business venture relies on each of them in equal measure. Venkman is the flash, Ray the heart and Egon the brains, but none of the three are limited to a single trait. Ray's propensity for joy ("Hey!

not even know about. His relentless pursuit of Dana Barrett (beautifully played by Sigourney Weaver) is cringe-inducing, responding to the statement "That's the bedroom, but nothing ever happened in there" with the line, "What a crime..." but when she's possessed by Zuul he resists come-ons such as "Take me now, sub-creature!" The character is the perfect balance of Murray's misanthropy and reluctant heroism. He's also prone to taking hits for the team; it's Venkman who gets slimed ("I feel so funky!"), although in fairness, it's Venkman who manages to

"THE TRIO OF VENKMAN, STANTZ AND SPENGLER IS PERFECTLY FORMED"

Does this pole still work?") is balanced by his general expertise and surprise put-downs, while Egon's encyclopaedic knowledge is given shades by his dry wit. Witness the way he tips Venkman how much to rip off the hotel manager, or the beautifully deadpan manner with which he emerges from under Janine Melnitz (Annie Potts's desk).

Of course, we could never forget Bill Murray – or as GZA greets him in Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee And Cigarettes*, "Bill Groundhog-Day, Ghostbustin'-ass Murray!" While we would argue that Murray doesn't get all the best lines, he certainly gets a lot of them, and nails them to the wall. Venkman is a sceptic who is confronted with a horrifying truth, and understands that there is a profit to be made. He's got the manner of a snake-oil salesman, but has a heart that he might

avoid getting any of the marshmallow gunk on him in the finale – it's all about balance.

The trio of Venkman, Stantz and Spengler is so perfectly formed that it's not too surprising that Ernie Hudson has to work hard to make an impression when he appears fairly late into the film as new recruit Winston Zeddemore. He brings a wonderfully grounded quality while managing to gel with the group better than anyone could reasonably expect given how long Murray, Aykroyd and Ramis had worked together.

It's a beautifully cast film all round, with Rick Moranis as the gloriously weedy CPA Louis Tully, Potts as the fantastically sour secretary Janine and William Atherton as the heinously dickless Walter Peck. The world of *Ghostbusters* is familiar, lived-in and plausible, in large part because of the New York it's set in. Given Aykroyd and ➤



CLASSIC QUOTES

"BACK OFF, MAN. I'M A SCIENTIST"
PETER VENKMAN

"RAY, WHEN
SOMEONE ASKS YOU
IF YOU'RE A GOD,
YOU SAY YES!"
WINSTON ZEDDEMORE

"THAT'S A BIG TWINKIE"
WINSTON ZEDDEMORE

"LET'S SAY THIS TWINKIE REPRESENTS THE NORMAL
AMOUNT OF PSYCHOKINETIC ENERGY IN THE NEW YORK
AREA. BASED ON THIS MORNING'S SAMPLE, IT WOULD BE
A TWINKIE 35-FEET LONG, WEIGHING APPROXIMATELY
600 POUNDS."
EGON SPENGLER

"YOU'RE RIGHT, NO
HUMAN BEING WOULD
STACK BOOKS LIKE THIS"
PETER VENKMAN

"HUMAN SACRIFICE, DOGS
AND CATS LIVING TOGETHER,
MASS HYSTERIA!"
PETER VENKMAN

"LISTEN... DO YOU
SMELL SOMETHING?"
RAY STANTZ

"I COLLECT SPORES, MOLDS
AND FUNGUS"
EGON SPENGLER



Ghostbusters seamlessly combines comedy with a thinly veiled dark side.



➤ Murray's status as *Saturday Night Live* veterans, a deep and abiding love for New York City is a given, and the film portrays it as a dirty, chaotic, but ultimately big-hearted place. It's a city that gets behind the Ghostbusters even when they're being thrown in jail, and where three down-on-their-luck guys can get back on their feet, become celebrities and save the world. However, the film gives New York more dark shades than successive family fantasy movies would, and a lot of that has to do with its elements of horror.

Ghostbusters is not a film that talks down to its younger audience. Leaving aside Ray's dream sequence in which a beautiful ghost fellates him while he's dressed in some kind of period military uniform, *Ghostbusters* knows when to go for the scare. Reitman establishes a creepy atmosphere in the library before following it up with the laugh, but once we get into

"GHOSTBUSTERS DOESN'T TALK DOWN TO ITS YOUNGER AUDIENCE... IT KNOWS WHEN TO GO FOR THE SCARE"

the film's second half and the hounds of Gozer the Gozerian are unleashed, there's some pretty dark material.

First, there's the pursuit of Louis, chased from his house party and out into the night by a hound from hell. As he flees across the park, he reaches the window of a fancy restaurant and hammers on the glass, pleading for help. As he falls victim to whatever is chasing him, the diners simply turn back to their meals. The working men and women of New York might be ready to rally and cheer on the good guys, but the one per cent will ignore

all cries for help, even when it's right in front of them.

More shocking is the attack on Dana. She returns to her empty apartment and sits down in her armchair with the lights off, before noticing a glow from under the door. As she turns to look, three arms burst out of the chair and grab her, keeping her stuck in her seat as it's pulled towards the light and she screams – heavy stuff, we think you'll agree.

This is backed up by Aykroyd's over-thinking of the histories and backgrounds of the universes of his films. He was

5 OF THE BEST TIE-IN SINGLES

Ray Parker Jr's *Ghostbusters* aside, which tie-ins are the greatest?

DREAM WARRIORS DOKKEN



1 A *Nightmare On Elm Street 3* was not only the best Freddy sequel; it also had a fantastic hair metal theme song. "Don't wanna dream no more!"

MEN IN BLACK WILL SMITH



2 Arguably the definitive movie tie-in song of the Nineties, Will Smith was undoubtedly at his peak with *Men In Black* – both the song and the film.

PET SEMATARY THE RAMONES



3 The Ramones made a ton of cash from this Stephen King tie-in, but conversely, the video finds them looking faintly bored in a graveyard.



From Mr Stay Puff to Slimer (top right), there's no end to the film's iconic imagery.



Among the predominantly male-dominated cast, Sigourney Weaver more than holds her own.

well-known for creating elaborate texts that detailed every element of his movies (he created a back story for the Bluesmobile), and the history that they reveal about the architect of Dana's building is a brilliant combination of HP Lovecraft and Aleister Crowley. Ramis delivers the monologue with barely restrained glee. "The architect's name was Evo Shandor. I found it in *Tobin's Spirit Guide*. He was also a doctor, performed a lot of unnecessary surgery. And then in 1920, he started a secret society... After the First World War, Shandor decided that society was too sick to survive. And he wasn't alone; he had close to a 1,000 followers when he died. They conducted rituals up on the roof – bizarre rituals, intended to bring about the end of the world, and now it looks like it might actually happen."

Of course, this horror doesn't last too long. When Peter, Ray, Egon and Winston

are forced to choose the form of their destruction, Ray goes to his happy place and gives cinema one of its defining images: Mr Stay Puff. Try keeping a smile from your face as the skyscraper-sized marshmallow man waddles through NYC. Still, nobody steps on a church in Venkman's town, and the stage is set for the ultimate demonstration of the Ghostbusters' unity. Aware that it could well be suicide, they finally cross the streams. "See you on the other side, Ray." "Nice working with you, Dr Venkman." There's that heart that we were talking about.

In fact, there's so much to talk about that we didn't get to touch on Louis' party, migrating sponges, big Twinkies, the whole hotel sequence, Dana's fridge, Vinz Clortho, Alice the librarian, or even the theme song. Which is why we'll always keep coming back to *Ghostbusters*. "We're ready to believe you!" 🍷

WATCH FIRST



AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (1981)

John Landis' classic has an inverse horror-comedy ratio to *Ghostbusters*, but it's hilarious and chilling.

WATCH NEXT



THE FRIGHTENERS (1996)

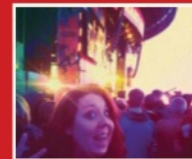
Michael J Fox hunts ghosts in Peter Jackson's flawed but frequently brilliant cult classic.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"Funny, scary, clever, brilliant acting..... DON'T CROSS THE STREAMS!"
@tattooed_mummy



"Pure, unadulterated, Venkman, Louis, Stay Puff, Janine, stream-crossing, JOY. What can't you love about that?"
@evilnoodle



"Listen! You smell something?"
#SayNoMore
@HippyDave



"The most genre defying, entertaining movie ever. I can watch it and watch it, and have done so since I was seven."
@lastcyberpunk



"*Ghostbusters* had the magic combination of Bill Murray's humour, wonderful pre-CGI SFX and that awesome Eighties soundtrack!"
@indianamulder

THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK ALICE COOPER



4 Horror aficionado Cooper gave Jason Lives: Friday The 13th Part VI a far better soundtrack than it deserved. Chich ichih ahaa...

DEEPEST BLUEST LL COOL J



5 LL Cool J earns a place on this list by writing his tie-in song from the perspective of the sharks hunting the movie's characters. Genius.



THE SCIFINOW SUPERNATURAL QUIZ

THE WINCHESTER BROTHERS HAVE BEEN HUNTING DEMONS TOGETHER FOR NEARLY TEN YEARS, BUT DO YOU KNOW YOUR SHIFTERS FROM YOUR ROUGAROUS, OR YOUR MEAT-SUITS FROM YOUR SHIPPERS? PUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST...

FAMILY FIRST

1. Whereabouts does the Winchester family hail from?
2. Who played Dean and Sam's father John?
3. What's the name of the creature that killed Mary Winchester?
4. How is Mitch Pileggi's character Samuel related to the brothers?
5. What is Dean's exact description of "The family business"?

GET BEHIND ME, SATAN

6. How many actors have played the demon Meg?
7. What is Sam's connection to Lucifer?
8. Season Three's Christmas episode featured pagan

gods of the winter solstice, but what was the catchier name for them?

9. Which is the only Horseman of the Apocalypse who Sam and Dean haven't put a stop to?
10. What was Crowley's position before he became King of Hell?

A FEW GOOD MEN (AND WOMEN)

11. Chuck Shurley authored a series of *Supernatural* books about Sam and Dean, but what is his true identity?
12. Castiel's look is based on which DC comic-book character?
13. What legitimate business does Bobby Singer run?

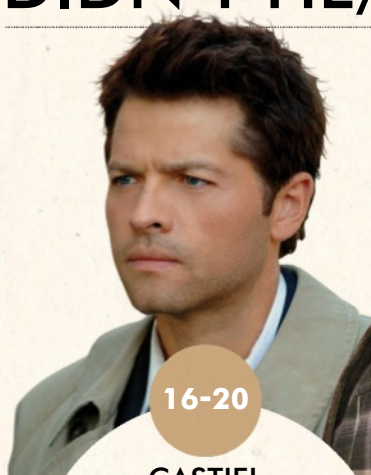
14. Where was Felicia Day's Charlie Bradbury a queen of?

15. Who was hunter Ellen Harvelle married to in an alternate timeline?

ARCANA

16. What make is Dean's car?
17. How is Dean/Sam slash fiction referred to?
18. What song plays over and over again in classic *Groundhog Day*-esque Season Three episode 'Mystery Spot'?
19. Where was Sam studying before Dean arrived to ask for his help in the pilot?
20. How does Dean describe himself in make-up in the meta-tastic episode 'The French Mistake'?

DIDN'T HE/SHE DO WELL! See how you did with our arbitrary scoring system



16-20

CASTIEL

You're an angel, which gives you an advantage when it comes to trivia, as you've been around a long time. However, you study so hard that some everyday things are a mystery to you. Get out more.



11-15

BOBBY

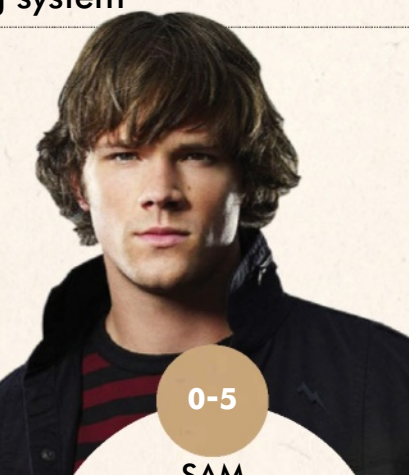
You might not know the answers straight away, but you'll hit the books to get them. When people are in trouble, they can count on you because you may have been born at night, but you weren't born last night.



6-10

DEAN

Your intuition is sound, but you're prone to making the same mistakes. Remember that the people you count on won't always be there, and every time you save your brother there's a hefty price.



0-5

SAM

You've got the looks and are built like a brick shithouse, but you've made more bad decisions than anyone we know. Don't trust demons, listen to your elders, and try to learn from your mistakes.

ANSWERS: 1. LAWRENCE, KANSAS 2. JEFFREY DEAN MORGAN 3. YELLOW-EYED DEMON, OR AZAZEL 4. GRANDFATHER 5. "SAVING PEOPLE, HUNTING THINGS!" 6. TWO, NICKI AYCOX AND RACHEL MINER
THREE IF YOU INCLUDE JARED PADALECKI 7. CHOSEN VESSEL 8. THE ANTI-SANTA 9. DEATH 10. CROSSROADS DEMON 11. HE'S A PROPHET (ALSO, POSSIBLY GOD) 12. JOHN CONSTANTINE
13. SALVAGE YARD 14. LARP REALM MOONDOOR 15. BOBBY SINGER 16. CHEVY IMPALA 17. WINCEST 18. 'HEAT OF THE MOMENT' BY ASIA 19. STANFORD 20. "I'M A PAINTED WHORE!"

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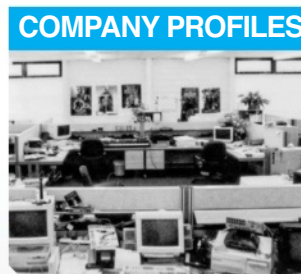


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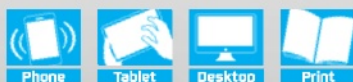


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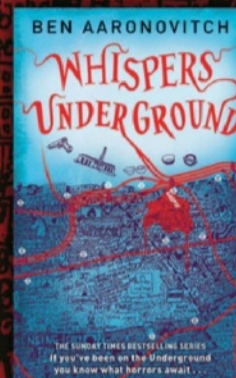
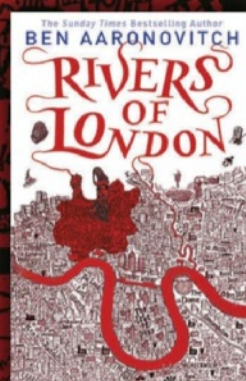
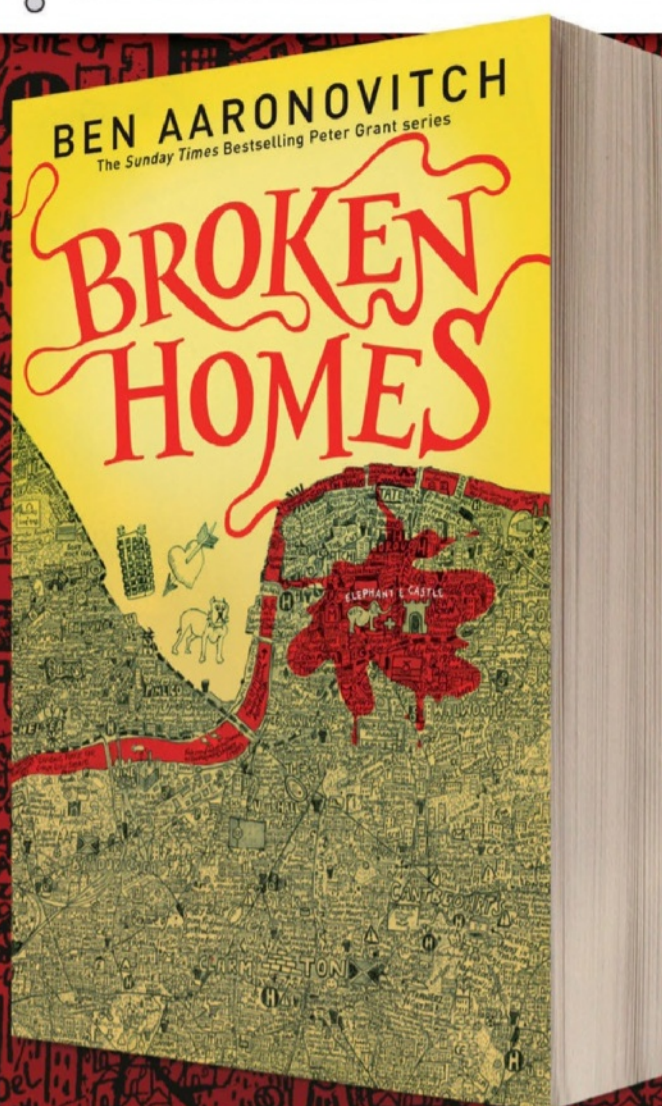


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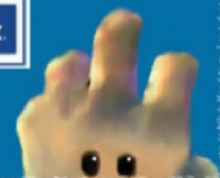


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